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# WIZARD®

COVER 1 OF 2

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the comics magazine • 82

"WHOSOEVER HOLDS THIS HAMMER, IF HE BE WORTHY, SHALL POSSESS THE POWER OF THOR"

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Lute

Red

Emelia

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Asellus

T260G

Riki

Blue

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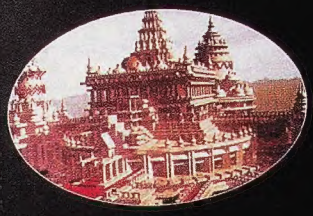
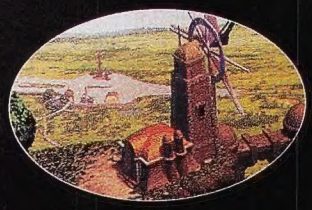
*Nothing's as good as revenge. As Red, you'll battle Black X, the man who killed your family. As Emelia, you'll enter the martial arts tournament to avenge the death of your lover. Just remember to stretch before strenuous activity.*





YORKLAND

*Serenity. Nature. A windmill. This is Yorkland, the birthplace of the musician Lute. But, as Riki, a millionaire gives you a ring. No, it's not love. It's one of the 8 legendary rings you need to save your decaying planet.*

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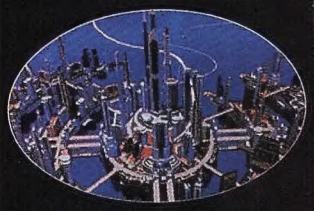
TEEN T AGES 13+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

## MANHATTAN

*The busiest shopping mall. And a prison. As Red, Manhattan is the beginning of the end of your quest. As Emelia, this is just the beginning of the beginning.*



## KOORONG

*It's a dirty metropolis and a hotbed of crime. As Blue, this is where you set off on the quest to kill your twin brother. And as the robot T260G, your lost past forces you to ask such questions as: Who am I? What is my mission? And, where can I find a good mechanic?*

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•

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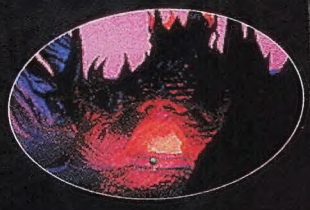
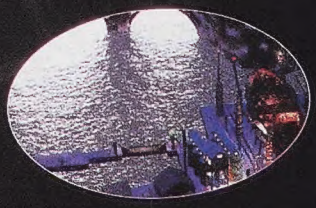


## FACINATURU

*You are Asellus. A transfusion of human and Mystic blood courses through your veins. This is where you've been resurrected, and thus begins your tragic wandering of conflicting passions.*



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- Grand Moff Tarkin
- Greedo
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  - in Carbonite Block
  - in Endor Gear
  - Bespin
  - in Stormtrooper Disguise
- Hoth Rebel Soldier
- Jawas (2-Pack)
- **Lando Calrissian**
  - as Skiff Guard
- **Luke Skywalker**
  - in X-wing Gear
  - in Dagobah Fatigues
  - as Jedi Knight
  - in Stormtrooper Disguise
  - in Hoth Gear
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- Momaw Nadon "Hammerhead"
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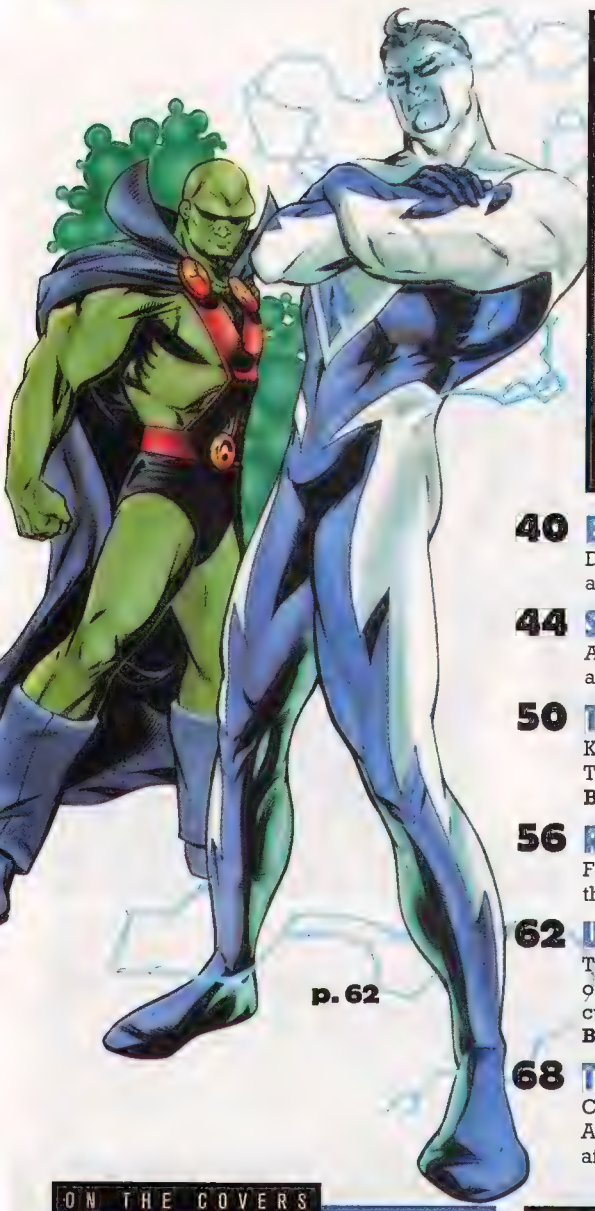
THE COMICS MAGAZINE • NUMBER 82 • JUNE 1998



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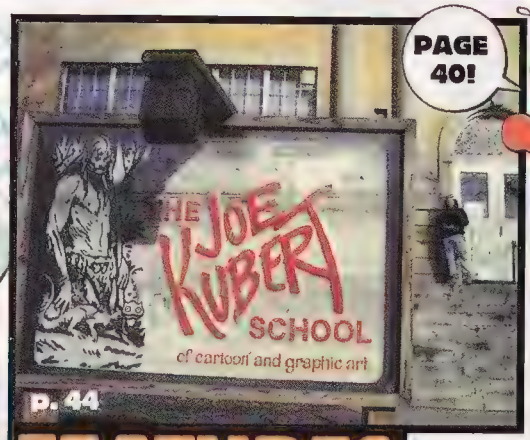


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**56 RING SIDES**
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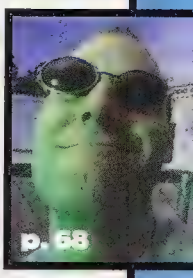

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### ON THE COVERS

**IRON MAN** (left) was illustrated by Sean Chen and Eric J. Cannon, and colored by Liquid Graphics. Check out **page 50** to peek inside Shell-head's armor. **JLA** was illustrated by Howard Porter and John Dell, and colored by Liquid Graphics. Fly to **page 62** to see if the current JLA title is doomed to fail like its predecessors.

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PHOTOS: KUBERT SCHOOL BY J. SCHUYLER; ERIK LARSEN BY ACEY HARPER.

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# CONTESTS


**86 WIZARD WORLD CHICAGO CON**
Get this: You could be high-flyin' it to this year's Chicago con, and we're footin' the entire bill! Hoo-hah!

**108 RE:GEX**
Tell us what makes a crappy superhero so crappy, and win an Awesome set of prizes, including your name in an issue of *Re:Gex*!

**128 CAPTAIN AMERICA**
Draw up a patriotic hero representing another country, and win a melting pot full of prizes, including your hero drawn by *Cap* artist Ron Garney!


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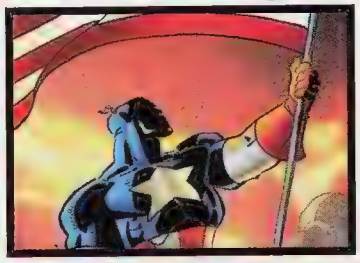

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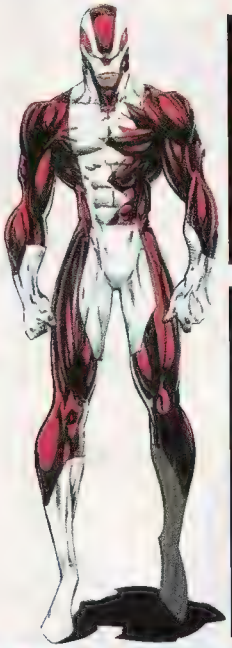

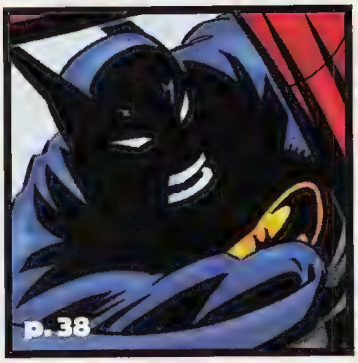

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# EXCLUSIVE OFFER

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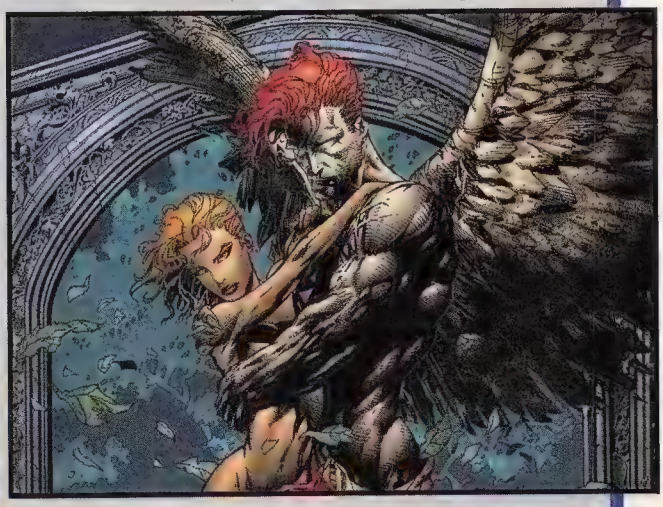
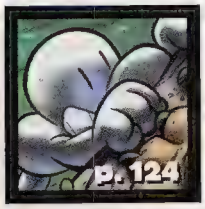
## ASCENSION #1/2

Holy crap! Here's your only chance to get the exclusive *Ascension* #1/2 comic featuring the revelation of that rat-bastard Voivodul's nefarious plan in a story by David Finch and Batt. Rise to the occasion on **page 80**.



PHOTOS: PAUL SCHRALLI



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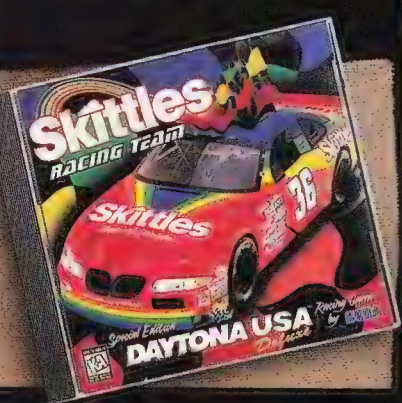


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## TASTE THE RAINBOW

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"THOSE BASTARDS!"

# FUN IN THE PARK

So many people I talk to are fascinated by the Chicago Convention we're putting on July 17-19. This month, we kick the show into high gear. We're doing everything from locking in major guests, booking flights and hotel rooms, signing up exhibitors and dealers and creating the programming. The show is a ton of fun (even though we work 362 days for a three-day event). This will be the first time we had a full year to put the show together.

I have a couple of ideas on how I want the show positioned and what I want it to accomplish. It is first and foremost about having fun. How do we make sure that everyone who attends the show has a great time? It's not about us, the exhibitors or the dealers. It's about the fans. Whatever works for them, works for us. Secondly, I want the show to be the media event of the year for the industry. This means world releases of products or news at the show. We'll have the world premiere of Mike Turner's new book *Fathom*, Awesome's world premiere of *Re:Gex* and a huge 35th birthday celebration for the X-Men. We had over 200 press people last year and will have even more this year.

The next really fun part is coming up with a great guest list. Who will the fans really want to see? Who will they drive miles and miles to come and meet? Well, we started with Todd McFarlane and have added more than 100 famous sci-fi stars, toy sculptors, artists and writers.

The last element I found to be very important was to add more than comics to the mix. Since fans have other hobbies besides reading comics, I wanted to make sure we had toy companies, fantasy and role-playing game companies, sci-fi collectibles, anime and, yes, even some Beanie Babies! There will be lots to see and buy.

This year's convention is going to be the biggest event in comics history. Make sure you come out to see us and many of your favorite creators at this year's Wizard World Chicago.

See ya there!

Gareb S. Shamus

P.S. Come to the Wizard Fan Awards event and find out which creators really are the fans' favorites.


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**JLA COVER ART** Howard Porter and John Dell, colored by Liquid Graphics

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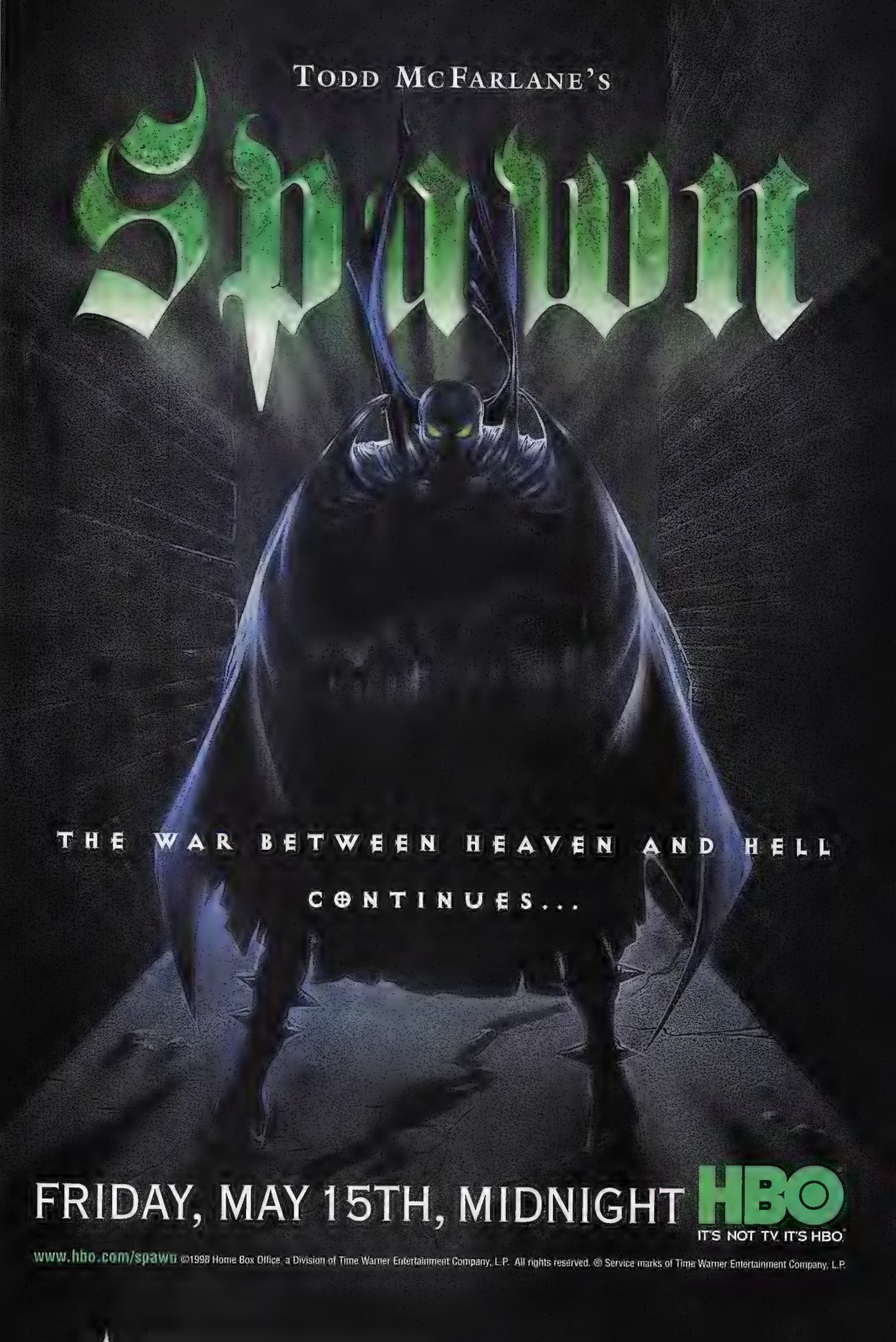
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# MAGIC WORDS

## SEX, SEX, SEX... BECOMING A PRIEST... NIGHTWING'S RELIGION... AND THE ORIGINAL PIE GUY!

**Your letters are now feature articles. Congratulations. Two of the biggest topics we've seen in the mail over the last couple o' months are the new JLA lineup (which you overwhelmingly hate) and the Hal Jordan/Kyle Rayner Green Lantern debate (which you seem very divided over). These subjects've been so durned big that we've pumped them up into full-blown features this month. So if you're looking for intellectual stimulation on these subjects, flip ahead and enjoy. And realize once again that what you've got to say impacts the magazine.**

**Meanwhile, right here, let's talk about sex. And other stuff.**

### Dear Wizard,

I'm a bit perturbed by the fact that public libraries ignore comic books. Most libraries now have audio and videotapes, magazines and computer software that people can check out. Why is it that graphic novels seem to be left out of the library modernization? At the least, libraries should stock some of comics' more "literary" work like *Sandman* or *The Dark Knight Returns*.

A few years ago, I put a letter in the suggestion box at my local library, asking that they add a comic book section. I accomplished a smaller step: They ordered hardcover copies of *Understanding Comics* and *Maus*. It wasn't much of a hassle for them. All the library needed to know was that someone was interested in this type of thing.

Could you please print this letter so that people know this is possible? If just one percent of your readership contacted their local libraries to get comics, it'd be a massive step in the right direction.

**Peter Ryan**
**Whittier, CA**

**Hey! Now there's a damned good idea! Wanna read comics for free? Have your library get some. It's worth a try, it's easy to do, hygienically safe and it costs you nothing. So do it today—you'll be glad you did.**

**But no fair asking 'em for *Penthouse Comix*. Speaking of which...**

### Dear Wizard,

We, as fans of the great artform known as the comic book, have a duty to preserve what has been started. When Marvel handed over *Avengers*, *Captain America*, *Fantastic Four* and *Iron Man* to Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld in "Heroes Reborn," they started the next revolution in comics. Soon, we will see every company handing over control of its top characters to other companies. To kick-start this revolution, I propose that Image Comics hand over the rights to all of its female characters to Penthouse Comix. Then we could have a *Penthouse Comix: Woman of Image Special*! Do you see the logic behind this wonderful idea? Do you?

We must make this happen! The time has come for this idea! It must not fade away! Write the companies, write your congressman! Just get this done!

**Michael Fraser**
**Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada**

**Gets pretty cold up there in the Yukon, doesn't it? Moving along...**

FROM MICHAEL TURNER

This July...

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# BUNNY AWARD

LETTER OF THE MONTH

*Jim takes his favorite letter of the month and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this, nor is there a prize.*

**Dear Mr. Wizard,**

I'm the guy who coined the now-famous saying "I like pie," in a letter back in *Wizard* #70, and now you're ripping off my material! I tell you that I like pie, and now everybody from Frank Miller (*Wizard* #74) to Jeph Loeb (#75) likes pie too. What's going on here?

**Greg Simons**
**Cincinnati, OH**

**What's going on here? It's very simple. Everybody likes pie. *Everybody*.**

**But let us give credit where credit is due: Greg is indeed the man who introduced us to the wonders of our new, and only mildly annoying, catch-phrase. As such, he should be lauded and a laurel wreath placed upon his brow! May he be hip-deep in pie forever!**

**Dear Wizard,**

That hidden *Kingdom Come* sex scene (mentioned by artist Alex Ross in "Magic Words," *Wizard* #79) is pretty hard to find...unless you see the original art up close. A friend of mine owns the page in question, and it's hard *not* to notice it when looking at the full-sized artwork. The scene in question is in *KC* #2, page 26, in the mosh pit at the club. In the bottom panel, Plastic Man is being pulled like taffy, and just above and to the left of that is what appears to be the Ray, *sans* pants, doin' a "vertical *mambo*" with a fellow audience member.

Needless to say, my friend and I were surprised and amused to see this. But we couldn't help but wonder what DC thinks of this little artistic surprise.

**Dave Haddy**
**daydream@avalon.net**

**Well, *Kingdom Come* editor Dan Raspler says, "Uh...it's not a sex scene. It's a bar scene. People are dancing, people are singing, people are jumping up and down, and I'm sure people are kissing. But I'm also sure that Alex is a very responsible, mature guy. He's a sophisticate. His high standards of morality would preclude him from doing something irresponsible like a sex scene. Wouldn't they?"**

**Don't bet on it. Alex confirms that this indeed is the now-famous sex scene. But what about his reference? Ross is famous for using photos of his buddies as reference when he paints. Did anyone...um...pose for this scene? Ross says no. "At the small size it ran, I didn't need models. It all came from my imagination," he says.**

**And a very active imagination it is.**

**Speaking of which, yet again...**

**Dear Wizard,**

I think Michael Turner is about the best artist that I know about. Does he have someone pose for him when he draws, or does he just draw from memory?

**Daniel Ceasar Jaramuth**
**Houston, TX**

**A little of both. Sayeth Mr. Turner: "When I first started, I used a lot of fashion magazine reference—but never comic stuff—for anatomical purposes only. As far as poses go, I made them all up. If you try to use magazine references for poses, the characters look 'posed.' They look too static because the models *are* posing for the camera.**

**"But that was all when I started. Now, I feel like I've got a good handle on it, so it pretty much all comes from my vivid imagination."**

**Dear Jim,**

Do you think there will ever be a "Lady Death" movie?

**Marlin Brownley**
**Conyers, GA**

**Yeah, I think there eventually will. But that's immaterial. What is material is the opinion of one Brian Pulido, Chaos! Comics president and Lady Death creator. Brian say: "As we speak, we are in negotiations with three companies for a possible 'Lady Death' animated feature movie. But I stress the word 'possible,' because these things always take time."**

**Oh Great Sage,**

I just saw the American Express TV commercial with Jerry Seinfeld and Superman. Is the guy reading a newspaper in front of the *Daily Planet* sign the actor who played Jimmy Olsen in the '50s "Superman" TV show?

**Ronnie Lanham**
**KnTemplar@worldnet.att.net**

**Now you, my friend, are one eagle-eyed geek. As a tip of the hat to the old "Superman" show, Jack Larson, the man who played Jimmy Olsen, was thrown in the commercial.**

**Dear Wizard,**

What does Superman's "S" stand for? I don't think it actually stands for "Superman," because it seems to me it's Kryptonian and "Superman" isn't a Kryptonian word. And if it is Kryptonian, then why does Supergirl wear it?

**David Sahawatana**
**snakarin@bayou.uh.edu**

**It's like this: In Pre-Crisis continuity, the "S" shield**

BUNNY PHOTO: PAUL SCHIRALDI

## HEY! IT'S PEN PALS...

Send your name, address, age, gender and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the "Magic Words" address at the end of this column (put your age on the envelope). If you want your Internet address listed instead, the only way to do this is to post your info in the Pen Pals board on America Online's "Wizard World" forum (keyword: Wizard; go to the Message Boards, then look under "Wizard Bulletin Board"). C'mon, make a friend!

was a Kryptonian symbol. But as of *The Man of Steel* #1's revamp, the "S" stands for "Superman." Clark Kent had his first public adventure in street clothes, and newspapers dubbed him a "Superman." Realizing the need for a costume and a secret identity, Kent headed home to Smallville, where he and Pa Kent hammered out the symbol.

As to other characters with the same symbol, DC's *Superman* Assistant Editor Maureen McTigue says, "Supergirl, Superboy and Steel wear it out of respect for Superman, although Superboy and Steel are a bit mixed-up. They actually thought they *were* Superman back in the 'Reign of the Supermen' storyline."

### Dear Mr. McLauchlin,

I am a devoted Christian and a devoted comic reader. I've noticed that in certain issues of *Nightwing*, some Christian paraphernalia has popped up in Dick Grayson's apartment. In issue #11, Nightwing sneaks back into his apartment/lair and knocks over some compact discs of Christian music groups DC Talk, Guardian and Whitecross. I also remember an issue where Bruce Wayne is looking through Dick's books and we see the letters "NIV," which stand for the "New International Version" of the Bible. Anyway, my question is: Is Dick Grayson Christian? And are these hints leading somewhere? Or are they just something the creative team throws in?

**Rich Bregitzer**
**bregs@juno.com**

They're just thrown in. According to *Nightwing* writer Chuck Dixon, "Dick is a Christian, but all the background stuff you see is just that—background. These aren't hints that will lead us to any plot with religious overtones. It's just that Dick has always been a very moral person, and it makes sense to have a religious belief be part of that."

### Dear Jim,

I was looking through Marvel's old *Falcon* mini-series and saw that the penciler was a guy named Mark Bright. Is this the "MD Bright" who currently pencils *Quantum and Woody*? I'm a huge Q&W fan, and would like to know if I have one of Mr. Bright's earlier works.

**Jody Price**
**Latonia, KY**
**JPrice7242@aol.com**

You do. The "Mark Bright" of *Falcon* is the "MD Bright" of *Quantum and Woody*. Know what's about 53 times weirder? That *Falcon* mini-series is written by a man named Jim Owsley...who now goes by the name "Christopher Priest" and writes *Quantum and Woody*. So why the name change? A number of rumors abound, but Owsley/Priest ain't spillin' the beans. "I've never said why and I never will," he says of his name change.

**ZACH PRINS**
Age: 18 Sex: Male
P.O. Box 32
Orange City, IA 51041
Likes: *Spawn, Witchblade*, most anime

**DAYMOND HOFFMAN**
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**DONNY GLASS**
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Springville, IN 47462
Likes: *Spectacular Spider-Man, X-Men, Witchblade*

**ADAM PARR**
Age: 12 Sex: Male
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Davenport, IA 52800
Likes: all X-titles, *Spawn, Fantastic Four*

**PATRICK KURTZ**
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Likes: *Spawn, Spider-Man*

**ALBERTO BELTRAN**
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San Antonio, TX 78214
Likes: *X-Files, Curse of the Spawn, Nine Volt*

**GUINEVERE D'AMICO**
Age: 15 Sex: Female
3907 W. 157th
Cleveland, OH 44111
Likes: *Catwoman, Gen13, Witchblade*

**"All I'll say is that every story and rumor you've ever heard about why I changed my name is true."**

### Dear Wizard,

I think the latest *Unlimited Access* crossover was the best so far of the Marvel/DC "Access" series. Will there be another "Access" series next year?

**David Grodsky**
**Jacksonville, FL**

**Maybe, maybe not. Tom Brevoort, the Marvel editor who took care of *Unlimited Access*, says, "At the moment, fans seem to be 'crossovered-out,' so we'll be giving [the hero] Access a rest for the near future. But, as said in the last issue of *Unlimited Access*, he'll be back again when you least expect it." Meanwhile, DC Comics Executive Editor Mike Carlin says, "No new 'Access' mini is in the works at the moment, though it *is* our turn to do one next."**

### Dear Jim,

Here are a few questions that have been boggling my mind:

1) How the hell do you pronounce your last name?

2) What does the word "mort" in the phrase "Mort of the Month" mean?

**Rodolfo A. Urriola O.**
**rurriola@hotmail.com**

**Here are a few answers to unboggle your mind:**

**1) It's pronounced "mick-LOCK-lin." Say it loud, say it proud!**

**2) "Mort" is taken from the Latin *mortis*, meaning "death." The "Mort of the Month" is our loser character of the month (Found at the bottom of the "Top 10 Heroes & Villains" column every month, kiddies!), a character who is so friggin' lame, he'd probably just be better off dead.**

### Dear Wizard Gods,

I'm a big fan of Peter David and I would like to know what kind of music he listens to when he writes.

Also, I know he writes *Incredible Hulk*. What other comics does he work on?

**Tristan Gill**
**tristang@linknet.net**

**Says David, who also writes DC's *Supergirl* and Claypool Comics' *Soulsearchers and Company* every month in addition to novels and TV scripts, "Oftentimes, I don't listen to anything while I'm writing. The peace and quiet forces me to focus. But if I do listen to something, it's usually appropriate to what I'm writing. If I'm writing a Star Trek novel, maybe a Star Trek soundtrack."**

### Dear Jim,

Whatever happened to Travis Charest?

**Jamon Gott**
**Northern Territory, Australia**

**Nothing much. He's currently doing painted covers for WildStorm's *C•23* and penciling a segment of the double-sized *WildC.A.T.s* #50 due out in June. WildStorm also hints that he'll be involved in something big by the end of 1998....**

### Dear Wizard,

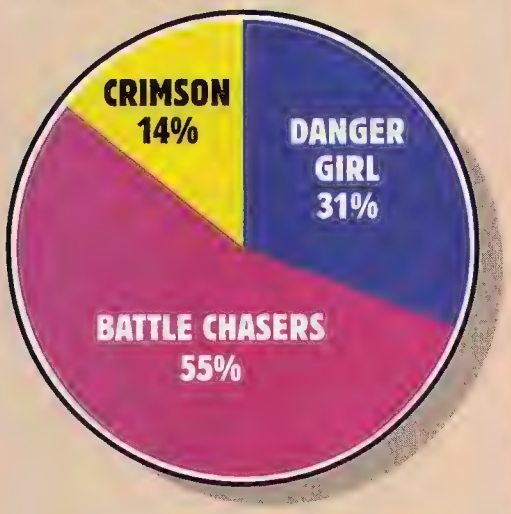
Last year I attended the Chicago ComiCon. I look forward to attending "Wizard World" this year. I do, however, have one request: How 'bout holding the show when the Cubs are in town so I can see a game at Wrigley Field?

**Rich Coppola**
**Port Charlotte, FL**

ONLINE QUESTION OF THE MONTH

## SURVEY SAYS

### Which Cliffhanger title excites you the most?




**Hey, it seems fans haven't been this interested in a new comic book imprint since Image Comics formed back in 1992! "C'mon, how can you not get all these books?" asked one fan who took part in our America Online poll. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents echoed this sentiment, saying they'd pick up all three Cliffhanger titles.**

**But if fans were stuck on a desert island, Joe Madureira's *Battle Chasers* would come with them. Why does the former *Uncanny X-Men* penciler win out? "J. Scott Campbell's *Danger Girl* looks like it has the same feel as *Gen13*," summed up one reader. "I've seen stuff like Humberto Ramos' vampire tale [*Crimson*], but Madureira's has that *Final Fantasy* flavor that no comics do anymore, or ever. It looks unique and seems like it'll be an epic." ■ MATTHEW SENREICH**

**LEIGH COBLEY**
Age: 19 Sex: Male
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Likes: *The Flash, JLA, Batman*

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Atlanta, GA 30322
Likes: *Shi, Books of Magic, SiP*

**LONNIE STAFFORD**
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*Spider-Man, Spawn, Gen13*

**SEAN MCEVILLY, 21/M**
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**RYAN LIBBERT, 16/M**
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*The Crow, Sandman, Preacher*

**LAURELI CLAYTON, 16/F**
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Unc. *X-Men*, all J. S. Campbell books

**PHILIP CHRISTIANSEN, 14/M**
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**LUCIEN JONES, 23/M**
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*Ascension, Batman, C. America*

**GRANT JOSLIN, 14/M**
joslin@ozramp.net.au
*The Crow*, all Spider-titles

**JASON HARTSFIELD, 15/M**
jasharts@juno.com
X-titles, *Wolverine*, new Superman

Imagine you're Batman™ and you've been thrown into a world of broken bones and twisted minds.

LEGENDS OF THE

DARK KNIGHT™

# LETTER ART

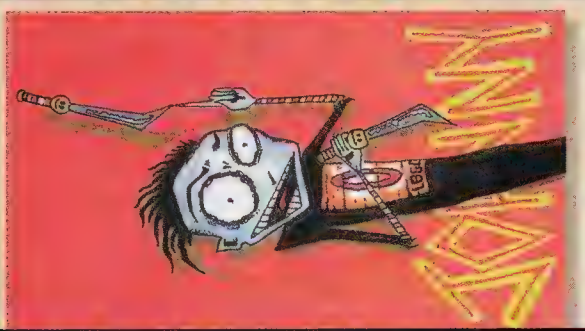
ALL FANS WHO HAVE THEIR LETTER ART PRINTED THIS MONTH WILL EACH RECEIVE A COPY OF *CONCRETE: STRANGE ARMOR* #1 AUTOGRAPHED BY CREATOR PAUL CHADWICK, PLUS A COPY OF THIS ISSUE OF *WIZARD* SIGNED BY THE ENTIRE *WIZARD* CREATIVE STAFF! THE TALENTED CREATOR OF THIS MONTH'S BEST ENVELOPE ALSO SCORES A SIGNED CONCRETE WATERCOLOR BY CHADWICK! (THANKS LOADS FOR THE LOOT, PAUL!) ARTISTS: PLEASE INCLUDE A CLEARLY PRINTED RETURN ADDRESS AND **A LIST OF CHARACTERS DEPICTED** ON THE **BACK** OF YOUR ENVELOPE. GOOD LUCK!

**ENVELOPE OF THE MONTH.....THE PRIZE**

**ROGUE (Mrrrooowrrr!)** Edward Rodriguez Fort Worth, TX

**"SOUTH PARK" KICKS X!** Brian T. Echols Lafayette, IN

**"REVERSE FLASH"** Chad Wm. Porter Weston, Ontario, Canada



**JOHNNY, THE HOMICIDAL MANIAC** Arturo Renteria Napa, CA

**Baseball fans, take note: This year's Wizard World Chicago convention takes place July 17-19...when the Cubs are out of town. But the Cleveland Indians are in the City of the Broad Shoulders for a three-game tilt against the White Sox. So, I say we all head Southside to Comiskey Park and catch a game. I've got tickets for Saturday the 18th already. It's a 7:05 start. Be there. The beer and bratwurst are on me.**

**Dear Jimmy,**

Any chance I could become "assistant letter-answerer" for *Wizard*? I'm very smart-mouthed.

**Jacob Keasling**
**Yukon, OK**

**"Very smart-mouthed," you say? Like a wise-ass attitude is all you need to do this job? Okay, I'll admit it helps. But hear this, Poindexter: THIS AIN'T NO TEDDY BEAR PICNIC! You think it's easy sorting through 3,000 letters a month? Calling artists in the Philippines and writers in England at all hours of the day and night? Researching obscure comic facts until your pupils fall out of your eyes? Spanning the globe to bring the constant variety of comic information that 92-octane geeks demand? Do you think it's easy? I say thee nay! Nay, a 1,000 times, nay! So take your "smart mouth," bring it on back to Oklahoma, and herd some cattle or something. Letter answering? That's a *man's* job.**

**At least that's what I tell 'em 'round here every two weeks on payday. Until next month, I remain...**

**—Jim McLauchlin**

*Jim McLauchlin is not trying to be flippant here, or irreverent, or exploitative, or sarcastic, or ironic or postmodern, and this is not a parody. Get it? Got it? Good.*

**Send letters to:**
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**151 Wells Ave.**
**Congers, NY 10920**
**or e-mail us at:**
**WizWords@aol.com**

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# SHAKING UP SPIDEY

## Marvel cancels Spider-Man title, turns to Mackie and Byrne to revive hero

"What people should know," Ralph Macchio, editor for the Spider-Man titles said, "is that the entire **Spider-Man** saga will end in September."

So what does this mean for the Spider-Man titles as we currently know them? Will Peter Parker die? Or will he groom a successor for the role of Spider-Man?

"Could be both," Macchio answered cryptically.

Marvel has announced the Spider-Man line will see a major shake-up this fall. It's hoping to jolt sales that have been lagging since 1994's "Clone Saga" storyline in which the classic Spider-Man was replaced by a clone of himself.

All four current Spidey titles—*Amazing Spider-Man*, *Peter Parker: Spider-Man*, *Sensational Spider-Man* and *Spectacular Spider-Man*—will end in September. No current, continuity-based Spider-Man titles will be published in October. Instead, this month sees the debut of a 13-issue mini-series with the working title "Twice Told Tales" —a "Year One"-like Spidey book, written and drawn by **John Byrne**. Also in October, *Spectacular Spider-Man* will be revamped and become an *Untold Tales of Spider-Man*-type book. Here, rotating creative teams will produce story arcs dealing with Spider-Man at different points in his career.

When the Spider-Man line returns in November, it will be pared down to two continuity-based books—***Amazing Spider-Man*** and ***Peter Parker: Spider-Man***, both of which will be written by current *Peter Parker* scribe **Howard Mackie**. Byrne will pencil *Amazing Spider-Man* while John Romita Jr. will continue to draw *Peter Parker: Spider-Man*.

MACCHIO

"Too many of the bigger franchises have lost their way because there are too many continuity-based books," Macchio said. "By giving people only two Spidey books in continuity and having them written by one guy, it makes the franchise more accessible."

Byrne's arrival on the Spidey titles marks the first-time the long-time writer/artist has worked for Marvel since 1992, when he wrote and drew *Sensational She-Hulk*.

"I suggested that I write one of the main books as well as 'Twice Told Tales,' so it didn't seem I was coming in, kicking over all the buckets and leaving without any care for what effect it had on the current character," Byrne said. "And Marvel had the great idea to have both Spider-Man books have a single voice by a single writer, so I suggested I could pencil one of the books and they agreed."

Whether Marvel restarts the Spidey titles with #1 issues is still undetermined.

The Spidey reboot will build from the ongoing "Identity Crisis" story in which Spider-Man was accused

**WEB-HEAD** Will fans swoop to the "new" Spider-Man in October? OPPOSITE: Byrne's redesigned Electro.

**"The entire Spider-Man saga will end in September."**
–Ralph Macchio, Spider-Man editor

of murder and forced to take on four totally new identities. "I want Spider-Man to remain with an outlaw status," Macchio said. "Even after you've been cleared of murder, like O.J. Simpson, most people don't want anything to do with you. We need to bring [Parker] back to the basics."

After "Identity Crisis" ends and Parker returns as Spider-Man in May, a series of still-secret events will lead to the Spider-books' conclusion and reboot. But how will the Spider-Man saga end? And what will the reboot entail?

While Marvel representatives aren't talking, speculation surrounds Byrne's "Twice Told Tales," which will update the Spidey origin for the '90s. Preview pages of "Twice Told Tales" show Otto Octavius—in his pre-Dr. Octopus days—involved in the lab experiment which created the radioactive spider that bit Parker.

However, Macchio insisted Spidey's origin will remain essentially intact.

"We will update the way some people look and add elements to Spidey's history, but we will not rewrite anything," he said.

Rumors are also escalating concerning a marital break-up between Mary Jane and Peter, or even Parker's death, but a Marvel source indicated Spidey has been through enough tough times in the past. The source pointed out Spider-Man was born when Parker's Uncle Ben was killed and ever since then, Parker's life never went right.

Could it be that Parker and Spider-Man live "happily ever after" come September? And then in November, new circumstances will inspire Parker to become Spidey again?

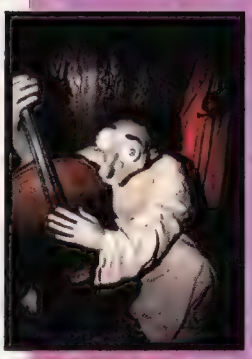
Macchio called the "happy ending" scenario "a very logical conclusion," but no one at Marvel would officially confirm or deny it.

"A happy ending? What a novel concept," Mackie said, laughing. "I'm not saying a word, but it would be a nice touch, huh?"

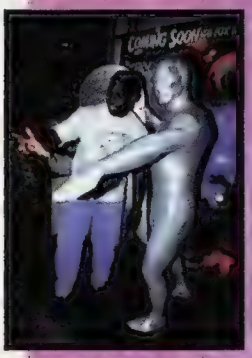
While not divulging specifics, Macchio said the Spider-Man editorial team does have a definitive plan.

"We want to throw some twists and curves at people," he said. "The Spidey saga will definitely not be what it was before."

And is Macchio afraid that another shake-up could be panned like the "Clone Saga"? "I'm not nervous," a confident Macchio said. "You do your performance and then wait for the applause or wait for them to throw the tomatoes forcing you to get off the stage." ■ **MATTHEW SENREICH AND CRAIG SHUTT**



*Frank Miller leaves comics, pursues career in music. "Coo-Kiest Coo-Kiest Coo-Kiest!" commented ex-writer/artist after fighting off a mob of Marty Feldman groupies.*



*Herald of Galactus asked to wear pants. "Pants? What need of pants is there to he who rides a shining silver board?!?" screamed disturbingly sexless hero before incinerating random DC fans.*

*Fat kid munches off at local comic con, gets ass kicked. "Look, I get up early, drive to work and spend eight hours dressed as this Wolverine guy," commented surly spandexed spokesmodel. "I don't need no 19-year-old virgin giving me crap about finding a way to get Adam Ant in me!"*

## WHAT'S IN & OUT

Come November, Marvel has announced that it will relaunch the Spider-Man line of books. Here's what's happening to each title:

| TITLE | OUTGOING CREATORS | INCOMING CREATORS | THE LOWDOWN |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Amazing Spider-Man* | Writer Tom DeFalco, penciler Joe Bennett | Writer Howard Mackie, penciler John Byrne | *Byrne bolts from DC to a year-long penciling run on* Amazing. *He will also assist with plotting on the regular Spider-Man titles if they're somehow derived from his "Twice Told Tales."* |
| *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* | Writer Howard Mackie, penciler John Romita Jr. | Writer Howard Mackie, penciler John Romita Jr. | Peter Parker *will be the only unchanged Spidey title. Mackie becomes the first writer to chronicle all of Spidey's continuity-based tales in over 20 years.* |
| *Spectacular Spider-Man* | Writer J.M. DeMatteis, penciler Luke Ross | Various | Spectacular*'s altered format allows various creators to write and draw short story arcs set in different time periods of Spidey's history. J.M. DeMatteis is slated to write the first three-issue arc.* |
| *Sensational Spider-Man* | Writer Todd Dezago, penciler Mike Wieringo | None | Sensational *is being canceled in favor of Byrne's 13-issue "Twice Told Tales," a "Year One" mini-series designed to update Spider-Man's origin for the '90s.* ■ **MATTHEW SENREICH** |

CONVENTION PEOPLE AND RALPH MACCHIO PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI.

# AWESOME SUSPENDS TITLES

## Liefeld's company still plans three books, toys

**Awesome Entertainment**, a small publisher enjoying a surge of momentum, saw its progress halted when its financial backer decided to scale back funding for comics.

Awesome President **Rob Liefeld** said that Crossroads Communications, the entertainment finance company that backs Awesome "looked at the numbers and decided to pull financing for books that weren't at break-even." Of Awesome's current slate of books, only three will continue as planned: ***The Coven***, by **Jeph Loeb** and Ian Churchill ("It's our strongest seller," Liefeld said. "It's profitable."); ***Menace***, by "Scream 2" actress **Jada Pinkett** and Dan Fraga ("We got a great financial deal on *Menace*. With Jada involved, it'll sell."); and ***Re:Gex***, by Loeb, Rob Liefeld and Batt. ("I'm the company president, so I can set rates and make myself the least expensive penciler on the planet," Liefeld said.)

All action figures Awesome has solicited are still coming out. "Toys are profitable," Liefeld said. "In fact, Crossroads wants *more* toys."

Awesome's remaining titles, including *Supreme*, *Youngblood* and *Kaboom*, are effectively canceled after May's issues. The planned ongoing launches of *Fighting American* and *Glory* have been taken off the schedule. Recent Awesome talent signings including **Alex Ross**, Jeff Matsuda, Ed McGuinness, Brandon Peterson, Steve Skroce and Jim Starlin have been released from their contracts, along with Awesome mainstay writer **Alan Moore**.

Ironically, it was this talent that gave Awesome its buzz. *Youngblood* penciler Skroce was particularly saddened by the affair. "They have good comics and good people at Awesome," he said. "I worked with [*Youngblood* writer] Alan Moore for two issues and it was terrific. I never felt so fulfilled as an artist. But I'm not independently wealthy. I've got to move on."

Liefeld also moves on, now with three titles and the hope of new backing, which he is actively pursuing to bring back properties he personally owns, including *Supreme*, *Youngblood* and *Glory*. "I still believe in the comic marketplace," Liefeld said. "This is only half a picture. You'll have the whole story soon." ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

# THE BUZZ BIN

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE COMIC INDUSTRY

**X-MEN UP FOR GRABS!** After coming oh-so-close with both Jason Pearson and Brandon Peterson, Marvel has yet to nail down a permanent artist on *X-Men*. Rumored to be taking over in 1999? *Wolverine*'s Leinil Francis Yu or *Incredible Hulk*'s Adam Kubert.

**X-MEN TIME WARP?** Could be. New Marvel golden boy John Byrne would love to do an "X-Men's Missing Years" series that would tell untold X-tales that happened between *X-Men* (vol. 1) #67-#93, when the book was in reprints. Look for the book to possibly hit on January 1, 2000, kicking off Marvel's new millennium.

BYRNE

**NEW X-MEN SPINOFF!** Concept sketches for the late-1998 X-Men spinoff title are being worked up by Marvel Senior Art Director Michael Golden and *Sensational Spider-Man* artist Mike Wieringo. The hot rumor? Even though the as-yet-unnamed title spins out of the X-Men, it will not involve mutant characters.

**BATQUAKE CONTINUES!** Word from Gotham is that the "Cataclysm" earthquake storyline that shook Batman up is only the beginning of the chaos. Expect title and creator changes in the Bat-Universe in late '98 and early '99.

**TITANIC CROSSOVER!** We know DC is launching a new *Titans* series in late 1998. But what hasn't been confirmed is that the company may launch the title out of a mini-series that has the new Titans crossing over with DC's biggest gun: The JLA. If it happens, look for it in the fall.

**McFARLANE SHOOTS! HE SCORES?** *Spawn* creator Todd McFarlane has always been a hockey fan. Now, he's looking to buy an interest in an National Hockey League team. McFarlane's name has been part of several ownership groups in several recent NHL franchise purchase proposals.

**TUCCI BATTLES BACK!** He's been absent from drawing comics for two years, but Shi creator Billy Tucci is looking to come back with *Battle Books*, a comic/gaming hybrid involving what he hopes will be many publishers. Already on board? The biggest kid on the block–Marvel.

**DEATH TO THE X-MEN!** Yep. The hot Marvel rumor mill tell us that this summer will see *two* competing teams of X-Men, one of which will die by August. Don't say we didn't warn ya.

JOHN BYRNE PHOTO BY J. SCHUYLER

# Fathom Trio Debuts

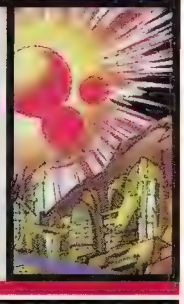
Top Cow Productions announced that ***Fathom* #1** will debut in three versions, each with three different internal "interlude" pages in July. They are as follows:

***Fathom* #1A** has an interlude from heroine Aspen's point of view. Sports an Aspen cover and makes up 50 percent of the print run. ***Fathom* #1B** contains three different interlude pages from an unnamed villain's point of view. This bad guy's on the cover and represents 25 percent of the run. ***Fathom* #1C** has an interlude seen through a mysterious figure's eyes (who won't show up until issue #6 or #7) with that character on the cover, and also makes up 25 percent of the run. ■ **MATTHEW SENREICH**

# we looked it up

WHO? WHERE? WHY?

**AS•GARD** *(ÄS gärd), proper noun, ancient times-present;* **1** In Norse myth, home of the gods and slain heroes **2** In the Marvel Universe, an other-dimensional continent, one of the "nine worlds" of Norse legend and home to Thor, Odin and a variety of giant and troll races **3** something given to particularly flatulent people, especially right after eating Mexican food



# OOPS!

In the recent *Wizard Batman Special*, Klaus Janson was not credited as being the inker of *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*. We apologize for the oversight.

WOLVERINE
VS
SABRETOOTH
•
WOLVERINE
#126
•
CHRIS CLAREMONT
LIENEL FRANCIS YU
X-MEN
IN MAY
UNCANNY
X-MEN #357
FURTHER ADVENTURES OF
CYCLOPS AND PHOENIX!
STEVE SEAGLE
DAN NORTON
TIM TOWNSEND
CABLE #56
DOMINO'S BACK!
JOE CASEY • LaBRONN
X-MEN #77
GUEST STARRING
THE BLACK PANTHER
JOE KELLY • GERMAN GARCIA
ART THIBERT
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# HULK'S WORLD SMASHED

## Peter David ends 12-year writer stint, Adam Kubert heads to 'X-Men' as new Hulk title launches

One of the longest ongoing creator streaks in comic history has come to a close.

**Peter David**, who started writing Marvel Comics' ***Incredible Hulk*** in 1986, has announced that June's #467 will be his last issue. It will also mark penciler **Adam Kubert**'s final issue. David cited unresolvable differences as his reason for leaving.

"I was told that I'd be required to come up with Hulk-centric plots that would have ramifications throughout the Marvel Universe," David said. "I don't like originating those. I feel guilty if I screw with other writers' plans for their own titles."

When asked if, after 12 years, there might be room for compromise, David responded, "I guess not. If there were, I'd still be on the book."

Kubert explained his departure by saying things "just worked for Peter and I to take our swan song together."

Kubert's impetus to depart the Hulk was an opportunity to work on the **X-Men**. Kubert previously worked on from 1994-96.

"[Marvel Editor-in-Chief] Bob Harras approached me about doing a short *X-Men* run," Kubert said. "When Peter told me #467 was his last issue, I figured it might be a good time to try it out." Kubert is slated to do four *X-Men* issues from September's #81 through #84—but not before he and David get their last crack at the Hulk.

DAVID

**THE END?** David's last issue of *Hulk* (#467) could act as "*the* last issue," says editor Chase.

*Incredible Hulk* #467 is a pivotal point that opens anew as it closes an old era. The story takes place 10 years in the future as a Hulk character speaks to an unseen writer (Read: Peter David) about events of the past.

"It's absolutely excellent," *Hulk* editor Bobbie Chase said. "But it's such a good end note that readers might think it's *the* last issue. So we're adding an epilogue from the new creative team."

That team is writer **Joe Casey** (*Cable*) and newcomer penciler Javier Pulido. Pulido sticks through #469 before making way for new ongoing penciler **Mike Wieringo** (*Sensational Spider-Man*). Chase insisted there is no bad blood between David and Marvel over the changeover. "In fact," she said, "Peter will be back to do a two-issue Hulk mini-series with Javier in November." She also said the intelligent Hulk, not the savage variety, will remain in *Incredible*. "That's why we're starting the other Hulk title (see sidebar)," she said.

As to David's future? He moves on to write ***Young Justice***, DC Comics' Impulse-Robin-Superboy team title. Only Kubert remains up in the air. "After *X-Men*, I don't know what I'll be doing for sure," he said. "But I always enjoyed the Hulk. Maybe again someday...." ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

## ON A RAMPAGE

The angry, savage "Hulk smash!" Hulk *not* appearing in *Incredible Hulk* will manifest this June in a second Hulk title–***Rampaging Hulk***, a new monthly by writer Glen Greenberg, penciler Rick Leonardi and inker Dan Green. *Rampaging* stories will be set about five years in Marvel's past, using the cast from the 1970s version of *Incredible Hulk*, according to Greenberg.

"There's no way to reconcile this version with the current Hulk take, so we're going to be telling stories from his past," Greenberg explained. The stories will be set during the time when Betty Ross was married to Major Glen Talbot, but the book won't try to weave around existing stories as *Untold Tales of Spider-Man* did. "I picked that specific period to make Betty a closed door to Bruce Banner," he said. "That will ensure it's a definitely different series than *Incredible Hulk* and open the book to Bruce having relationships with other women." ■ **CRAIG SHUTT**

PETER DAVID PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

AVENGERS #6
Guest-Starring
The Squadron Supreme!
KURT BUSIEK
GEORGE PEREZ
AL VEY
MARVEL HEROES
IN MAY
IRON MAN #6
GUEST-STARRING
THE BLACK WIDOW!
KURT BUSIEK
PATRICK ZIRCHER
CAPTAIN AMERICA #7
ANDY KUBERT • MARK WAID
FANTASTIC FOUR #7
CHRIS CLAREMONT
SALVADOR LARROCA
ART THIBERT
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# ON THE MOVE

WHERE ARE THEY GOING?

It seems like comic creators move faster than baseball free agents in an expansion season these days. Can't keep up? Here's a handy-dandy little chart that ought to help.

| NAME | FORMER BOOK | NEW BOOK | EXCLUSIVE CONTRACT? | THE SCOOP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Batt | *Ascension* | *Re:Gex* | No | Batt, who takes over inking the all-new *Re:Gex*, still owns half the *Ascension* property. |
| John Byrne | *Wonder Woman, Jack Kirby's Fourth World* | Spidey mini-series, *Amazing Spider-Man* | No | Byrne tries to jump-start his career by dumping DC for high-profile Spidey projects. |
| Joe Casey | *Cable*, which he still writes | *Incredible Hulk* | No | The *Cable* guy is now seeing green. |
| Peter David | *Aquaman, Incredible Hulk* | *Young Justice* | No | David's unparalleled 12-year Hulk run crashes to halt due to philosophical differences. |
| Ron Garney | *Captain America* | *Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty* | No | Garney departs core Cap title for second time in three years. |
| Adam Kubert | *Incredible Hulk* | *X-Men* | Yes (Marvel) | Former *Wolverine* artist returns to X-family with four-issue *X-Men* run then...maybe back to the Hulk? |
| Andy Kubert | *Ka-Zar* | *Captain America* | Yes (Marvel) | After jump-starting *Ka-Zar*, Kubert gets to realize dream by drawing Cap. |
| Erik Larsen | *Savage Dragon*, and he hasn't left it | *Aquaman* | No | Image founder Larsen tries to keep stagnant *Dragon* afloat with injection of DC cash. |
| Eric Luke | *Ghost* | *Wonder Woman* | No | With Byrne's departure, DC turns to relative newcomer in writer Luke (*Ghost*). |
| Carlos Pacheco | *X-Men* | *Avengers: World in Chains* maxi-series | Yes (Marvel) | Drops *X-Men* to draw Marvel's other heavy-hitters (and Pacheco's all-time faves), The Avengers. |
| Kevin Smith | movies, which he still writes | *Daredevil, Green Arrow* | No | "Chasing Amy" director chases his first love–comics writing. |
| Michael Turner | *Witchblade* | *Fathom* | Yes (Top Cow) | Comics' hottest artist springboards into the creator-owned pool |
| Mark Waid | *Ka-Zar* | *Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty* | No | Comics' golden-boy writer maintains office space at Marvel, still freelances for DC. |
| Mike Wieringo | *Sensational Spider-Man* | *Incredible Hulk* | Yes (Marvel) | Wieringo is also designing new characters for top secret X-project slated for next year. |

KUBERT AND WAID PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHRALDI; BATT PHOTO BY AL ORTEGA

# ADAMS MONKEYS AROUND WITH GEN[13]

This June and July, *Gen[13]/Generation X* artist **Art Adams** returns to **Gen[13]**, but this time he's bringing along friends.

Adams promised WildStorm Productions that he would do more Gen[13] projects, but only on one condition: "I told them the only way I'd do more is if we could put my **Monkeyman and O'Brien** in it," Adams explained. "They said, 'Hey, no problem.'"

MONKEYMAN AND FRIENDS

Adams will get his chance to write and draw the two-issue mini-series titled *Gen[13]/Monkeyman and O'Brien* slated for June and July. Adams' creations meet Gen[13] because Gen[13] mentor Lynch knew Ann O'Brien's father, Adams said. "Someone gets in contact with Lynch with news that O'Brien would be interested in, so he has to go see her." In the story, the heroes face off against...themselves? "It sounds odd, I know," he said. "But the villains *are* themselves." ■ DALLAS MIDDAUGH

# MARVEL DECIDES TO PLAY ROUGH

Marvel's hoping its fans like it a little rough. As a part of a new project, the company will offer behind-the-curtain versions of two recent premiere issues. May's ***Avengers #1: Rough Cut Edition*** features **George Pérez**'s pencils from the popular "Heroes Return" title—minus inks, color and word balloons. The 48-page, $2.99 book will also contain **Kurt Busiek**'s original plot. Similar treatment comes in June with ***Thor #1: Rough Cut Edition*** featuring pencils by **John Romita Jr.** and plot by **Dan Jurgens**.

But beyond the mere pleasure of admiring Pérez and Romita's art, there's work to be done. "It's also a look into the process of making a comic," explained editor Tom Brevoort, who drew comparisons to *The Official Marvel Try-Out Book*, a past Marvel release that served as a search for new talent. With *Rough Cuts*, would-be pencilers can interpret professionally written plots to come up with their own pages. And would-be writers can glimpse different ways to lay out a plot.

Jurgens touted the "Rough Cuts" projects for helping to demonstrate the "collaborative medium" that comics are. ■ SCOTT A. AUBREY

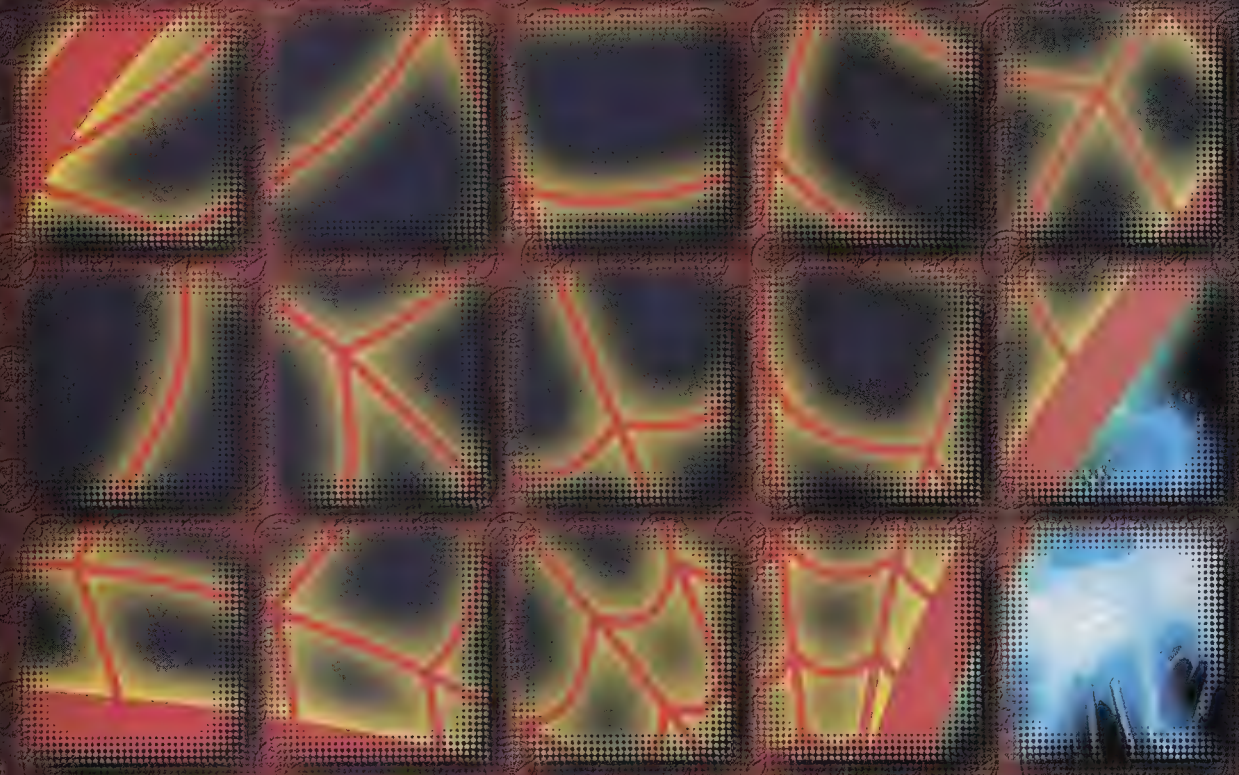
**Spider-Man VS Black Tarantula**

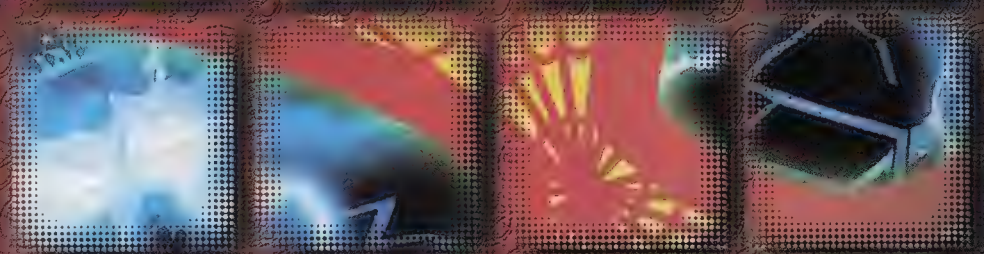
•

**AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #436**

•

TOM DEFALCO • JOE BENNETT • BUD LAROSA





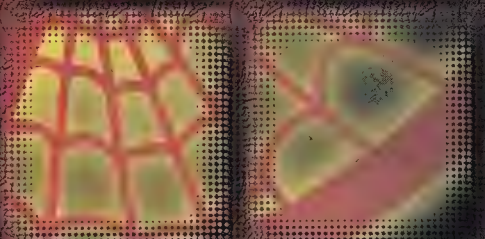
**SPIDER-MAN**

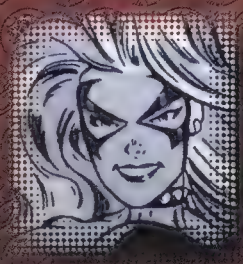
**SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #259**

HOBGOBLIN IS BACK!

STERN • ROSS

GREENBERG • GREEN





**SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN #29**

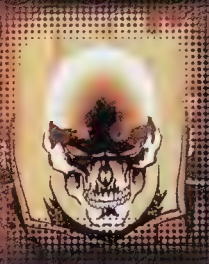
GUEST-STARRING THE BLACK CAT!

DEZAGO • WIERINGO • CASE

**PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN #93**

THE RETURN OF GHOST RIDER

MACKIE • SALTARES



MARVEL COMICS

BELIEVE IN THE IMPOSSIBLE

IN MAY

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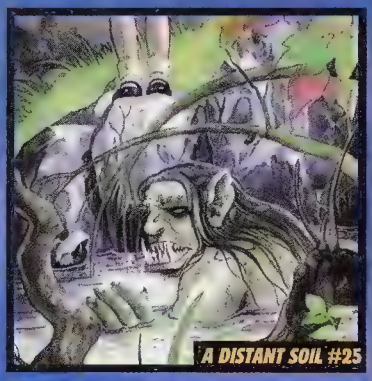
COMPANY UPDATES

UPDATES AND RELEASES FROM AROUND THE INDUSTRY

**ALTERNATIVE PRESS**
The new quarterly *Triple Dare* debuts in May, featuring new 10-page stories by Tom Hart, **James Kochalka** and Jon Lewis.


A DISTANT SOIL #25

**ARIA PRESS**
*Sandman* legend **Neil Gaiman** writes one of two stories in the double-sized *A Distant Soil* #25 in June.

**CARTOON BOOKS**
June's ***Bone*** #33 shows the lasting effects of Phoney Bone's dragonslaying days. Also, look for the 48-page *Trilogy II Tour Book* (featuring work by **Jeff Smith**, Linda Medley, Charles Vess, Mark Crilley, Stan Sakai and Jill Thompson), which coincides with this year's "Trilogy" convention tour.

SMILEY, THE PSYCHOTIC BUTTON

**CHAOS! COMICS**
Evil Ernie's pal **Smiley, the Psychotic Button** gets his own one-shot in June.

**CLAYPOOL COMICS**
**Paul Dini** (*Batman Adventures*) returns to *Elvira: Mistress of the Dark* to write May's #61.

**COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND**
The Fund is offering a 39-card *Visions of Freedom* set featuring exclusive artwork by creators like Mark Badger, Evan Dorkin and **Dave Gibbons** (*Watchmen*). You can order this $15.00 set (suggested for mature collectors) by calling 1-800-99-CBLDF.

# KEVIN SMITH TO WRITE 'GREEN ARROW'

## 'Chasing Amy' director tries 'Chasing Oliver'

Wanna write comics? Try writing movies first.

It worked for **Kevin Smith**, "Clerks" and "Chasing Amy" screenwriter and lifelong comics fan. Smith parlayed movie fame into an upcoming run on Marvel's ***Daredevil***, and now he's got his dream project in his sights: DC's ***Green Arrow***.

"The current *Green Arrow* ends in September," said Darren Vincenzo, *GA* editor. "Then, we're off for two-to-six months to accommodate Kevin's schedule and we should relaunch the series with a new #1. Kevin will be the regular writer and, as long as his schedule allows, he can write to his heart's content."

What Smith will be writing is *two* Green Arrows. Smith has a strong affection for former (and currently missing-in-action) Green Arrow **Oliver Queen**. "And I love [current GA] Connor Hawke," Vincenzo said. "As long as I'm editing, Connor will be around in some capacity."

Vincenzo said Smith's coming to the title happened though a chance meeting. "Kevin came to DC for lunch and I ran into him in the hall. He said if [current *GA* scribe] Chuck Dixon ever wanted off, to give him a call. Well, Chuck had to leave because of a big workload, so I called Kevin and offered it to him. He thought about it for all of 10 seconds and said, 'I'm in.'"

The only kink to iron out? How to bring Queen back into the title. "We met over beers for a few hours and came up with literally 12 possible ways to do it," Vincenzo said. "It's just a matter of picking the best one now."

■ JIM McLAUCHLIN

**QUICK SHOT** Oliver Queen meets Kevin Smith in an all-new *Green Arrow* #1.

# 'Fathom' Debuts in Chicago

Want *another* reason to go to this summer's big con?

Wizard World Chicago, the July 17-19 convention at the Rosemont Convention Center, will be your first (or maybe *only*) shot to get a number of great comics and goodies. Among them:

***Fathom* #1**—Show dealers will have a Wizard World convention-exclusive cover on **Michael Turner**'s new title. See any table for pricing.

***Re:Gex* #1**—Awesome Entertainment's new title by creator **Rob Liefeld** will have a Chicago variant cover is available on #1 and Genie action figure is also available at the show.

***Purgatori Preview***—A preview of Chaos! Comics' ongoing ***Purgatori*** series debuting in September. It's written by **David Quinn** (*Faust*) with pencils and inks by **Al Rio** (*Gen*$^{13}$). The price is a mere $2.

***No Justice, No Piece* #2**—This 48-page Head Press anthology features the talents of at least 24 creators including **Warren Ellis** (*StormWatch*) and **Brian Stelfreeze** (*Batman: Shadow of the Bat*). The price is $2.95 and a Wizard World-exclusive cover is available. A portion of the proceeds go to the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund.

For con information or tickets, call 1-800-690-1669. ■ JIM McLAUCHLIN

THE X-MAN #40
WHO ARE GREAT BEASTS?
TERRY KAVANAGH
RICHARD PACE
AVENGERS#1
ROUGH CUT
KURT BUSIEK'S PLOT
GEORGE PEREZ'S PENCILS
48 PAGES
MARVEL
HOT PICKS
IN MAY
IRON FIST
#1 (OF 3)
COVERS BY
CARLOS PACHECO
DAN JURGENS
JACKSON GUICE
SCOTT KOBLISH
HULK #466
THE MOST TRAGIC
MOMENT IN THE LIFE OF
THE HULK EVER!
PETER DAVID
ADAM KUBERT
MARK FARMER
MARVEL COMICS
BELIEVE IN THE
IMPOSSIBLE
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**CRUSADE ENTERTAINMENT**
**Tomoe** returns—and is confronted by the evil Oni in June's *Shi: The Series* #13.

**DC COMICS**
The "Superman Adventures" cartoon-writing team of Evan Dorkin and Sarah Dyer introduce the animated **Supergirl** in May's *Superman Adventures* #21. . . Two covers (one featuring Hal Jordan, one Kyle Rayner) are found on every copy of May's *Green Lantern* #100. . . *The Books of Magic* celebrates issue #50 in May as writer John Ney Rieber ends a 50-issue streak and hands off the book to artist **Peter Gross**. . . **"Ghost Stories"** is the theme of this year's DC Annuals.

**FRIENDS OF LULU**
The organization of comic pros and readers presents **LuluCon II**, a conference geared toward finding new ways to get kids (especially girls) into comics, at the Newark Airport Marriott June 13 and 14. Call 619-286-1591 for more info.

**HURRICANE COMICS**
**Adam Hughes** (*Ghost*) will draw an all-new cover to *Chassis* (vol. 2) #1 in May.

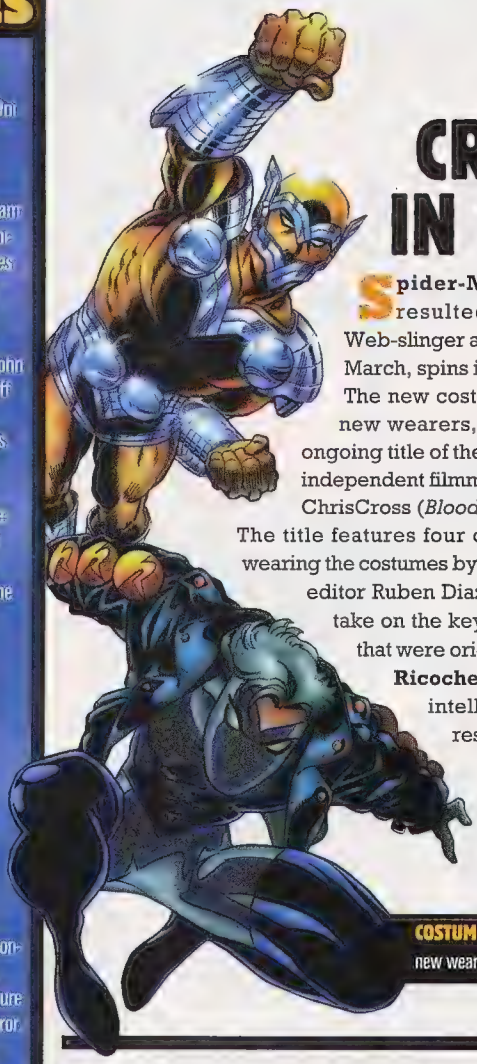
**IMAGE COMICS**
**• HOMAGE COMICS**
June's *Desperadoes: A Moment's Sunlight* collects the first five issues of the cool Western series in one $16.95 package.
**• TODD MCFARLANE PRODUCTIONS**
May's *Total Eclipse* retailer-incentive comic will contain artwork from Greg Capullo, Brian Stelfreeze, Kelley Jones, Alex Garner and more, and will feature such characters as **Spawn**, Airboy and Black Terror.
**• TOP COW COMICS**
**Jason Pearson** (*Body Bags*) signs on for an issue to handle art chores on June's *Witchblade* #24.
**• WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS**
Alan Moore, James Robinson, **Jim Lee** and Travis Charest contribute to June's *WildC.A.T.s* #50, with Lee supplying a wraparound cover. . . June sees the release of the second issue of ***Resident Evil***, the magazine containing game tips, interviews and comic stories.

**LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS**
*Razor* #50 brings the vigilante back to the asylum she escaped from, and features a cover by **Tony Daniel** (*The Tenth*). The July book also offers a Michael Bair alternate cover and a leather cover by writer/artist Everette Hartsoe.

**MARVEL COMICS**
May's *Marvel Universe* #2 is available with variant covers by **John Byrne** or

**BYRNE'S *MARVEL UNIVERSE* COVER**

# 'IDENTITY CRISIS' LIVES IN 'SLINGERS'



**Spider-Man's "Identity Crisis,"** which resulted in four new identities for the Web-slinger and big sales increases for Marvel in March, spins into four new heroes in September. The new costumes Spidey created will receive new wearers, who team up as "Slingers" in an ongoing title of the same name. ***Slingers*** is written by independent filmmaker Joseph Harris, with pencils by ChrisCross (*Blood Syndicate*).

The title features four college kids who are duped into wearing the costumes by a mysterious benefactor, explained editor Ruben Diaz. As the book develops, each will take on the key Spider-Man personality elements that were originally associated with that identity: **Ricochet**'s youthful exuberance, **Hornet**'s intellectual curiosity, **Dusk**'s sense of responsibility and **Prodigy**'s heroism.

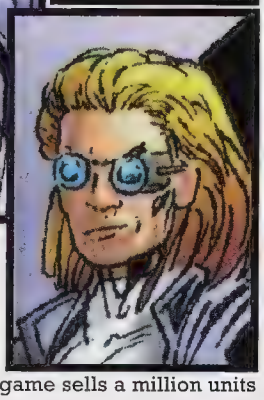
"It's somewhat gimmick-driven," admitted Diaz. "But what we hope to do is take those gimmicks and blast them, *á la* the movie 'Scream.'" ■ **CRAIG SHUTT**

**COSTUME PARTY** Spidey's four new costumes will get new wearers in the upcoming *Slingers*.

# Acclaim Comics Cuts Titles

After June 1998, **Acclaim Comics** as you know it will exist no more.

Acclaim President **Fabian Nicieza** said that due to "profit and loss" issues, the company will cease publication of all its current comic titles. "There's still an 'Acclaim Comics,'" Nicieza said, "and we'll still do comic content, although not in traditional comics." Late 1998 and 1999 will see Acclaim magazines and books based on Acclaim video game properties, including those that started in comics like *Bloodshot*, *Shadowman* and *Turok*. But, Nicieza said, "They'll be in different formats tailored to reach a bigger audience. Something's out of whack when the *Turok* video game sells a million units and the *Turok* comic sells 13,000 copies."



**ADIÓS, ACCLAIM** Say goodbye to *Quantum and Woody*, as well as a host of other Acclaim books.

Acclaim's *Concrete Jungle* mini-series will continue through its end in September, and the critically acclaimed *Quantum and Woody* will survive through a to-be-determined Website, with occasional *Q&W* paperbacks collecting online material slated to be published later. ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

# MARVEL

## *May Highlights from the House of Ideas!*

### On sale May 6

- ☐ **Cable #56**
  The terrifying threat of Stilt-Man?
- ☐ **Daredevil #377**
  "Flying Blind"part 3: DD a S.H.I.E.L.D. agent!
- ☐ **Fantastic Four #7**
  Technicalities with the Technet!
- ☐ **Ka-Zar #15**
  On the run from... the Punisher!
- ☐ **Marvel Team-Up #11**
  Sub-Mariner vs. Iron Man!
- ☐ **Maverick #11**
  Guest-starring the Soviet Super-Soldiers!
- ☐ **Sensational Spider-Man #29**
  Welcome to Murderworld!
- ☐ **Thor #1**
  The FIRST-ever FIRST issue!

Art from THOR #1

- ☐ **Uncanny X-Men #357**
  Is Jean Grey the Phoenix again?!
- ☐ **Werewolf By Night #6**
  It's a killer!!!
- ☐ **X-Men: The Manga #8**
  X-Men vs. Magneto–Wolverine vs. Sabretooth!

### On sale May 13

- ☐ **Alpha Flight #12**
  Double-sized! A Member Dies!
- ☐ **The Amazing Spider-Man #436**
  To the death against the Black Tarantula!
- ☐ **Avengers #1: Rough Cut Edition**
  Special 48-pg. commemorative printing!
- ☐ **Conan: River #2 (of 3)**
  War in the Black Kingdoms!
- ☐ **Doctor Who #265**
  His official, full-color photo mag!
- ☐ **Fury/Agent 13 #2 (of 2)**
  The search for Fury continues!
- ☐ **Generation X #40**
  The mystery of Penance revealed!
- ☐ **Iron Man #6**
  Guest-starring the Black Widow!
- ☐ **Marvel Adventures #16**
  Starring the Silver Surfer!
- ☐ **Marvel Universe #2**
  Captain America! Sub-Mariner! Human Torch!
- ☐ **Marvel Annual '98 Starring: Deadpool and Death**
  Deadpool gets Weapon X'd out! 48 pages!
- ☐ **Spider-Man: The Manga #14**
  First: Spider-Man falls! Next: all of Tokyo!
- ☐ **Star Trek: The Untold Voyages #5 (of 5)**
  Double-sized lead-in to *The Wrath of Khan*!
- ☐ **X-Factor #147**
  Attack of the Mandroids!
- ☐ **X-Men Visionaries: The Writing of Chris Claremont**
  Art of Byrne, Cockrum, Windsor-Smith, Guice, Baker, Davis and Lee!

### On sale May 20

- ☐ **Bring Back the Bad Guys TPB**
  Magneto, Kingpin, Mandarin, Kang, Galactus!
- ☐ **Captain America #7**
  Andy Kubert!
- ☐ **Excalibur #122**
  Against the original X-Men!
- ☐ **Heroes For Hire #13**
  Ant-Man journeys into the original Human Torch!
- ☐ **Incredible Hulk # 466**
  Most devastating event in the Hulk's life!
- ☐ **Man-Thing #8**
  Ted Sallis is back!
- ☐ **Marvel Annual '98 Starring: Spider-Man and Devil Dinosaur**
  Marvel Annual! 48 Pages!
- ☐ **Peter Parker, Spider-Man #93**
  "Identity Crisis" The Conclusion!
- ☐ **Seeker 3000 #2 (of 4)**
  After 25 years, the survey team finds life!
- ☐ **Star Trek: Riker**
  Public Enemy Number One! 48 pages!
- ☐ **Thunderbolts #16**
  Against the Lightning Rods?!
- ☐ **What If? #110**
  Colossus leads the Soviet Super-Soldiers!
- ☐ **X-Man #40**
  Madelyne Pryor and the Beasts are back!
- ☐ **X-Men #77**
  Guest-starring the Black Panther!
- ☐ **X-Men: The Manga #9**
  The Morlocks strike!

### On sale May 27

- ☐ **Avengers #6**
  Showdown with the Squadron Supreme!
- ☐ **Deadpool #18**
  Continued from Deadpool & Death '98!
- ☐ **Essential Wolverine Vol. 3**
  528 pages in glorious b&w!
- ☐ **Iron Fist #1**
  Fist's first! Dan Jurgens! Jackson Guice!
- ☐ **Quicksilver #9**
  Concluding Pietro's Savage Land adventure!
- ☐ **Marvel #2**
  The House of Ideas' all-new catalog!
- ☐ **Shadows and Light #3**
  Bob Layton! Jim Starlin! Arthur Suydam!
- ☐ **Silver Surfer #141**
  Who is Sama-D?
- ☐ **The Spectacular Spider-Man #259**
  Roger Stern and the original Hobgoblin are back!
- ☐ **Spider-Man: The Manga #15**
  Double-sized issue! Spider-Man vs. Mysterio!
- ☐ **Star Trek Unlimited #10**
  Twice the pages! Twice the crews!
- ☐ **Wolverine #126**
  Wolverine vs. Sabretooth!
- ☐ **X-Force #79**
  The identity of Reignfire revealed!

Art from IRON FIST #1

MARVEL COMICS

WWW.MARVEL.COM

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## NEWS&NOTES

Dave Gibbons. Dan Jurgens (*Superman*) writes and Carlos Pacheco (*X-Men*) provides covers for a three-issue *Iron Fist* mini-series starting in May. Marvel's "Strange Tales" horror books combine into a monthly *Strange Tales* anthology starting in June.

### NEW ENGLAND COMICS

*The Tick: Big Blue Destiny* #5 and #6 are both scheduled to come out in June and lead into this summer's *Lump Big Trilogy* story.

### ONI PRESS

**Neil Gaiman** will add his writing talents to a three-issue story arc in *Oni Double Feature* beginning with issue #6 in June, adapting the short story "Only the End of the World Again."

### QUANTUM CAT ENTERTAINMENT

**Joe Madureira** contributes a variant cover and a story involving two of his *Battle Chasers* characters to May's *Frank Frazetta Fantasy Illustrated* #2.

### SAINT GRAY PRESS

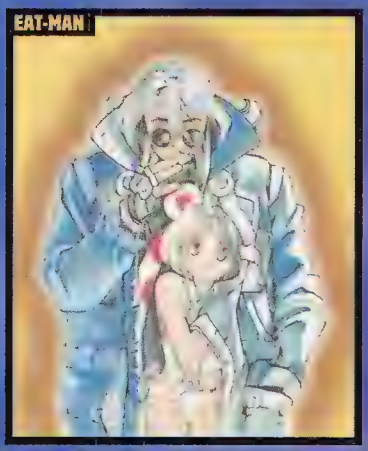
Actor **Bruce Campbell** ("Army of Darkness") will provide the introduction to the premiere issue of *Guy Pumpkinhead*, coming out in June.

### SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT

The ever-popular trio of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll are featured in "Culture" by **Joseph Michael Linsner** in June's *Crypt of Dawn* #4.

### TOPPS COMICS

Topps adapts the "**X-Files**" feature film into comic format in a June-shipping 56-page book by John Rozum and John Van Fleet. Cover price is $5.95.


EAT-MAN

### VIZ COMICS

The 192-page *Eat-Man* graphic novel due in June reprints the six-issue *Eat-Man* mini-series.

### WARP GRAPHICS

June will see the publication of *Legacy*, the second in WaRP's new line of "phone book"-style **Elfquest** graphic novels. The softcover black-and-white book tells the story of Ember, the chief's daughter, as she goes on a quest to save the Wolfriders. ■

# DC BATTLES OVER BRAINIAC

**DC Comics** has a bone to pick with Brainiac.

**Brainiac Internet Services**, that is. The small company, which provides Internet connections for Rhode Island customers, has been in business since 1995. But DC recently saw fit to issue a warning to the company's owners, citing a trademark violation. "Their lawyer sent us a letter," Tom Miller, one of Brainiac's founders, said. "We were instructed to take down our site (brainiac.com) within 10 days."

Brainiac, of course, is one of Superman's adversaries. Perhaps not coincidentally, he's also slated to appear in Warner Bros. upcoming "Superman Reborn" film, a fact that many speculate as DC's reason for cracking down on BIS. Is DC overreacting? "We were aware of the character, but it wasn't what we were thinking of when we named the company. There are lots of people in this world referred to as 'brainiacs.'"

DC is keeping mum on the subject, but Brainiac (the company, not the evil mastermind) feels things can be resolved without too much hassle. "We're hoping to keep this amicable," Miller said. "We're not looking for a fight." ■ **JAKE ROSSEN**

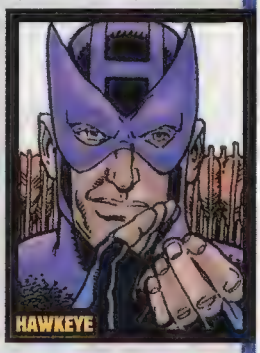
# THUMBING OFF

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

## THUMBS UP

**DC'S 'SKIP WEEKS'** Up until 1996, four weeks during the year had no new comics shipping. DC Comics has since filled the gaps giving fans themed one-shots like April's "Girlfrenzy" and July's second wave of Tangent Comics. As long as the talent is top-notch and the concepts are clever (like the first wave of Tangent comics), we'll keep reading 'em.

**PUBLISHERS RECRUITING CELEBS** Event/Marvel's wooing filmmaker Kevin Smith ("Chasing Amy") to write *Daredevil* and Awesome's attracting Jada Pinkett ("Scream 2") to create *Menace* have given comics a boost by capturing the attention of MTV, *Entertainment Weekly* and "Entertainment Tonight." Any takers on getting Stephen King on *Dr. Strange*?


HAWKEYE

**HAWKEYE** Brooding leader. Grief-stricken husband. Armored hero. Over the last 14 years, *The Avengers'* Hawkeye has been everything *but* what he started out to be: a headstrong rebel. But the recent *Avengers* #1-#4 and *Captain America* #4 have finally hit the bull's-eye by returning the archer to his sarcastic roots. Welcome back, Hawk!

## THUMBS DOWN

**VARIANT COVERS** Eleven *Darkness* #11 covers and 12 *Youngblood* #1's? Heck, even *Wizard* had three covers for its issue #80. C'mon, guys–relying on this cheap sales gimmick only serves to create collectors, not readers.

**DC'S HANDLING OF *AQUAMAN*** Writer Peter David resurrected *Aquaman* four years ago and has made the title among the richest DC publishes. Now that he's split *Aquaman* due to "creative differences," we hope DC hasn't sunk this book.

**PROMETHEUS' DEFEAT** New *JLA* villain Prometheus kicks the entire JLA's collective butt... and is taken out by a disguised Catwoman? In *JLA* #17, fans drooled to see how the team would beat this powerhouse, but his swift demise is so far the biggest disappointment of 1998. A word to Team JLA: Next time DC's most dangerous villain shows up, either crap or get off the pot. ■

# BYTETHIS

SURF THE NET!

## C.H.I.X. TO GO!

Wanna win this cover of *C.H.I.X.* #1 drawn by **Adam Warren**, Aaron Lopresti, Ron Randall, Matt Haley and **Terry Dodson** with inks by **Karl Kesel** and Tom Simmons? The only way you can do it is by logging on to Wizard World for contest details and previews of the upcoming *C.H.I.X.* series. We also have a chat with these creators on June 23 (see below). Do it today–you'll be glad you did!

Visit the new, improved Wizard World Online site at keyword: Wizard on America Online or at http://www.wizardworld.com

## CHAT HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE SPECIAL EVENTS ROOM

**JUNE 2 (Tuesday)**

• ETHAN VAN SCIVER

Hide the children! Cyberfrog creator Ethan Van Sciver, the man set to pencil a short run of *Impulse*, joins us for his first-ever chat.

**Time:** 8-9 p.m. (EST)

**JUNE 9 (Tuesday)**

• RON GARNEY

Meet the hand who helped revive Captain America! Artist Ron Garney logs on for a rare Wizard World appearance.

**Time:** 8-9 p.m. (EST)

**JUNE 15 (Monday)**

• "BREAKING IN" CHAT

Learn how to break into the comic field, with Glass House Graphics manager David Campiti and special guests!

**Time:** 8-9 p.m. (EST)

**JUNE 16 (Tuesday)**

• BRIAN HOLGUIN

The hottest band in the world is now the hottest comic book in the world! Meet *KISS: The Psycho Circus* writer Brian Holguin as he discusses the most talked-about comic going! Maybe he knows some secrets about Gene Simmons....

**Time:** 8-9 p.m. (EST)

**JUNE 23 (Tuesday)**

• STUDIOSAURUS

The studio behind *C.H.I.X.* logs on to tell you all about drawing hot babes (and other stuff). Join Warren, Lopresti, Randall, Haley, Dodson, Kesel and Simmons for a loopy-fun time online.

**Time:** 8-9 p.m. (EST)

■ Buddy Scalera (WizBuddy@aol.com)

# TANGENT, PART TWO

It's back! DC Comics' Tangent Comics returns after its successful run last October. Once again, nine one-shots will ship during the same week in July. Here's the breakdown...

**Backstory:** In the Tangent Universe, World War III erupted as a result of the Atom's intervention in the Cuban Missile Crisis. Nuclear war destroyed Florida, leaving Atlanta (now "New Atlantis") as the southernmost point in the United States. With the United States and U.S.S.R. still in the Cold War, superheroes have begun to emerge.

**Concept:** Take the *names* only of established DC characters and apply all-new superhero concepts to them.

• **GREEN LANTERN** (A tag-team of nine writers and artists)
Short stories reveal more on the mysterious woman holding the **Green Lantern**, an artifact that can raise the dead.

• **FLASH** (Todd Dezago/Paul Pelletier)
The sprightly female **Flash** will have more lighthearted mirth, caused by a trip into Tangent's version of cyberspace.

• **NIGHTWING** (John Ostrander/Jan Duursema)
**Nightwing**, an ultra-covert government agency, sees superheroes as a threat and will take measures to deal with them.

• **JOKER** (Karl Kesel and Tom Simmons/Joe Phillips)
The prankster **Joker** will explore the mysteries of New Atlantis. This title also features the return of the futuristic Doom Patrol.

• **POWER GIRL** (Ron Marz/Dusty Abell)
**Power Girl** examines what's happening in communist China, a country trying to genetically engineer its own superheroes.

• **BATMAN** (Dan Jurgens/Dan Jurgens)
"Tangent" creator **Dan Jurgens** sets this universe's **Batman** in London, as a man trying to make up for his past sins.

• **SUPERMAN** (Mark Millar/Butch Guice)
Tangent's **Superman** and **Batman** share a connection with Arthurian legend, Merlin, mysticism and magic.

• **WONDER WOMAN** (Peter David/Angel Unzueta, with Gene Ha)
A warrior alien from planet Gotham comes to Earth and becomes Tangent's most powerful and dangerous being.

• **JLA** (Dan Jurgens/Darryl Banks)
**The Justice League of America** is a patriotic group of ordinary, non-superpowered citizens who have created an organization to fight a common threat. The question is: What exactly is that threat? ■ **MATTHEW SENREICH**

# contestwinners

LUCKY STIFFS

• Steve Douglas of Wheatfield, Ind., is on his way to becoming a top fashion designer. He won the **"DESIGN THE IMAGE T-SHIRT"** contest in *Wizard* #77, and his design will become the next Image T-shirt!

• Steven Lindsay of Englewood, Col., walks away with a Sony PlayStation and 10 games courtesy of *Wizard* #77's **"ULTIMATE BATTLE"** contest!

• John LeBlanc of Oshawa, Ontario, Canada, won a ton of Awesome Entertainment loot, including the entire Awesome library, in *Wizard* #78's **"MOORE SUPREME FOR ME"** contest!

# EXIT LAUGHING

## DC editor Archie Goodwin leaves behind a legacy of laughter

In a fourth-floor conference room at DC Comics, Publicist Patty Jeres and editors Mike Carlin, Andy Helfer, Chuck Kim and Denny O'Neil are laughing and laughing hard. Carlin is taking off his glasses and dabbing his eyes, laughing so hard he's crying. Kim is holding his ribs because his side hurts from laughter. The occasion? It's not what you might think. These people are gathered because one of their number has passed away. **Archie Goodwin**, 60, a longtime writer and editor at Warren, Marvel and DC, has finally succumbed to a long battle with cancer on March 1. The choice at DC is simple: Don't mourn. Celebrate, as Goodwin would have wanted.

**GOOD MAN** DC's playful editor was a mentor to young talent.
OPPOSITE: Goodwin's self-caricature on a DC note pad.

Kim, who worked as Goodwin's assistant at DC, chimes in with a story about his fascination with the fantastic. "We got a 3-D comic in once that came with the 3-D glasses," he remembers with a smile. "Archie put them on and couldn't stop yelling, 'Cool! Cool!' at every page in the book. Then he looked around the room and realized that *everything* looked cool with these glasses on. So he ran down the halls looking at everything on the walls. I think he left the office and was wandering down the street with these glasses on. He was gone for two hours. When he finally returned, he was rubbing his temples. He had a headache from looking through the glasses for so long. But then he put them right back on again and stared at the wall with a big, happy smile on his face." The room chuckles and agrees: Goodwin looked at everything with a childlike wonderment. "Archie never grew up," Carlin says. "That's why he worked so well in this business."

Carlin takes the floor and tells a story from the days when he worked at Marvel, when Goodwin was the editor-in-chief of that company's Epic line. "There was a decree at Marvel once," Carlin recalls, "to get the editors in earlier. So Archie, being a good employee, got there the earliest the next day. And he showed up in a nightgown and nightcap, and worked the whole day through like that. I thought at the time, 'This is one of the bosses here. What a cool guy to work with.'"

"That was the thing about Archie," Kim says. "He'd do anything for a joke. And his favorite target was always himself."

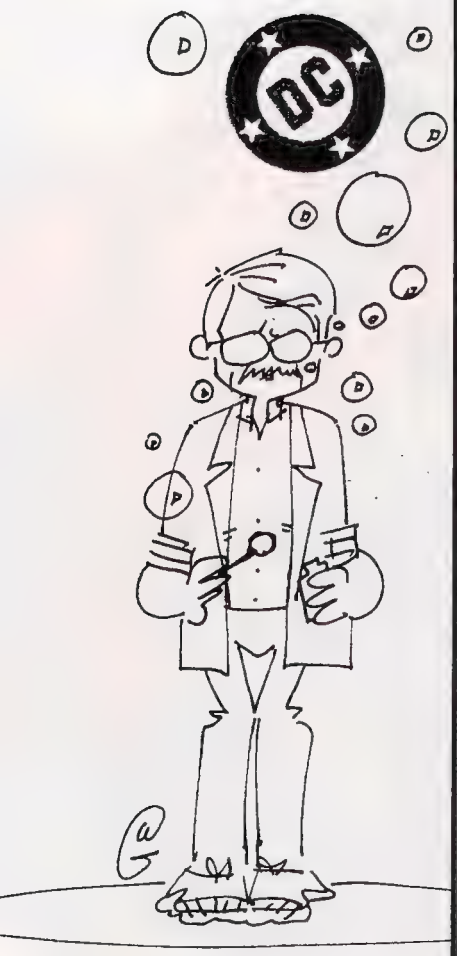
Denny O'Neil reminds us that Goodwin had a serious side that went along with the jokester, which he could seemingly turn on at will. "Archie could be two people,"

### ARCHIE GOODWIN (1937-1998)

**Career Highlights**

- Editor-in-Chief, Warren Publications, 1965-1974
- Editor-in-Chief, Marvel Comics, 1976-1977
- Founder and Editor-in-Chief, *Epic Illustrated* and Epic Comics, 1982-1990
- Group Editor, DC Comics, 1990-1998
- Writer of *Star Wars* newspaper strip, 1981-1984
- Writer of Marvel's *Star Wars* comic, most issues between #11-#44
- Writer of the critically acclaimed "Manhunter" back-up story in *Detective Comics* #437-#443

ARCHIE GOODWIN PHOTOS BY CRAIG BLANKENHORN



he says. "When it was appropriate to be an adult, he could be the adult." A large part of being the adult was nurturing new talent and new books. Goodwin picked two raw kids—writer James Robinson and artist Tony Harris—and a retread property called *Starman* and tuned the book into both a critical and commercial success. "Archie took a chance on Tony and I," Robinson says over the phone from his California home. "Neither of us had ever done more than five consecutive issues on anything before *Starman*. But Archie saw us through the problems and the deadlines and made us very professional." Not that it was easy. "If it wasn't for my dedication to *Starman*, I might have quit comics altogether," Robinson says in almost reverent tones. "And that commitment came from one place: Archie Goodwin."

Another phone conversation. Artist Al Williamson, Goodwin's longtime collaborative partner, remembers a reunion with Goodwin. "After the 'Star Wars' newspaper strip I worked on with Archie," he says, his voice rising as the memory floods back. "I called Marvel looking for work. They were doing the *Star Wars* comic. Archie returned the call. He hadn't written *Star Wars* in four years, but he said, 'Hey, Al! I got a story for you! They'll let us do issue #98!' I told him great. He sent me the plot, and there were two characters in there named Victor and Valerie—two of my kid's names—exactly the same ages as my kids. He wrote that story especially for me. That was a sweet thing to do."

Meanwhile, back in that fourth-floor conference room, the laughter continues. They're talking about one of Goodwin's favorite laugh-getters, the "bag of bones," a fall the editor would do where he could just collapse into a heap on the floor at will. O'Neil can barely catch his breath. Helfer, just back from the dentist and sporting a serious toothache, is laughing so much he's forgotten the pain. Five people are laughing, and somewhere, you've just *got* to figure that Archie Goodwin is laughing too. ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

NotA

# LAST MAN STANDING

comic battles you never thought you'd see

## BATMAN VS. DAREDEVIL

### THE COMBATANTS

TALE OF THE TAPE

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 6'2" | HEIGHT | 6' |
| 210 lbs | WEIGHT | 200 lbs |
| 74" | REACH | 72" |
| Gotham City | HOMETOWN | Hell's Kitchen |
| 2 | HORNS | 2 |
| Cave | HIDEOUT | Apartment |

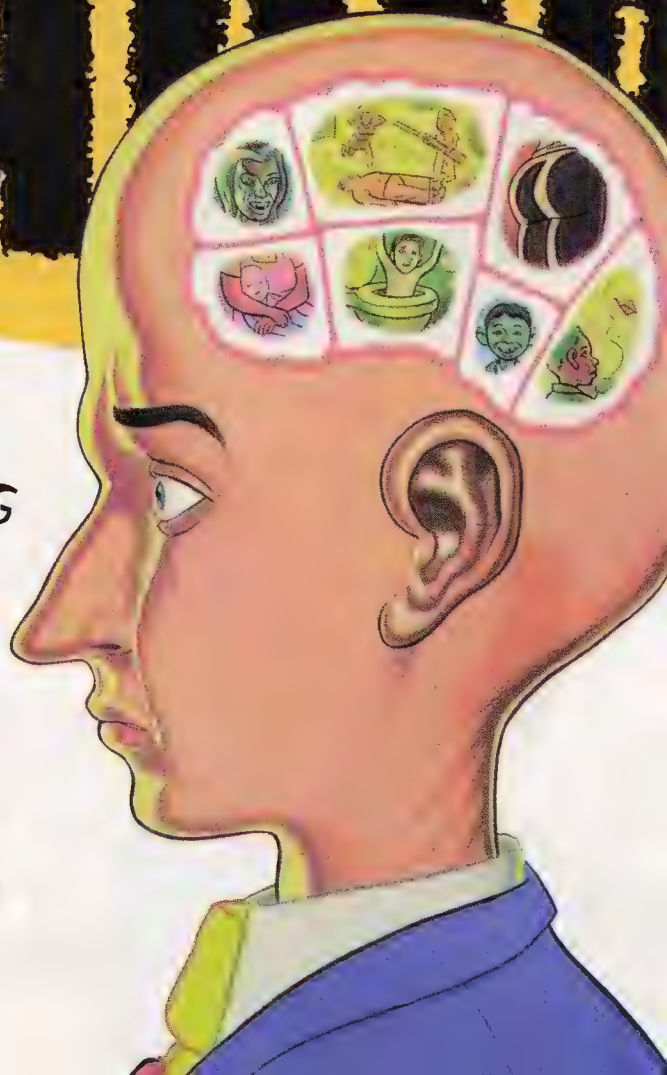
Batman, the Dark Knight Detective. Daredevil, the Man Without Fear. They're two men who had their lives shaped early on by the murder of their parents (or parent, in DD's case) and became vigilantes to make sure that what happened to them wouldn't happen to anyone else. Both reveal only their chins in their one-color jammies, rely on gadgets to get them out of tight spots (Bats has his high-tech vehicles and utility belt, DD has a stick with a rope in it), and are masters of a multitude of diverse fighting styles. The biggest difference between these two? Daredevil's as blind as a, umm...bat. So, instead of eyesight, DD's five senses are pumped to an inhuman level, where he can hear a person's heart skip a beat when he (or she) lies, can "read" the ink indentations on a paper with his fingertips and has a nifty radar-like sense that allows him to "see" a full 360 degrees around his body. Batman? No superpowers—just the keenest, most analytical mind in the DC, or ANY universe.

**tha winnah...** The faster, more agile Daredevil may be on the offensive at first, but he doesn't stand a chance against Batman's most powerful weapon: his brain. After a few minutes of combat, Batman's gonna deduce that DD's blind. A barrage of sonic blasts, heat-flares and a handful of Batarangs (to drive that radar-sense crazy), and a senses-overwhelmed Daredevil falls to blows landed with surgical-precision by the Dark Knight Detective.

this month's battle drawn by GRAHAM NOLAN

# BEHIND THE EIGHTBALL

DAN CLOWES' RAUCOUS, RAMBLING ANTHOLOGY EIGHTBALL GIVES READERS A LOOK INSIDE THE MIND OF AN OFFBEAT VOYEUR



**MIRROR IMAGE** Clowes' self-portrait

# DAN CLOWES CAN GET A BIT PERSONAL.

When asked to describe his black-and-white anthology comic *Eightball*, Clowes will break into a story about how his editor originally deemed the book a failure. Pressed further on the book's content, he'll give you his thoughts about the film "Titanic" and how he was shy growing up. He's got plenty of opinions, just none of them about *Eightball*. Now, really, Dan, is *Eightball* all about you?

"I don't know if I'd call it an autobiographical comic," Clowes says in a thoughtful voice. "I write about what interests me and hope that the audience will follow along with me. There's no agenda behind what I write."

Fantagraphics Books' *Eightball*, which packs anywhere from one to seven stories into an issue, oftentimes reads like some surreal dream. For the first 10 of the series' 18 issues, readers were plunged into the hallucinatory serial-story mystery "Like a Velvet Glove Cast in Iron." The tale's Clay Loudermilk, a detached young man, sees his ex-girlfriend in a bondage/sadomasochistic film and is compelled to find her. As he searches for her, Clay crosses paths with Tina, a grossly misshapen girl, and her oversexed, despondent mother, both of whom clumsily try to seduce him. Clay escapes their advances and falls in with a secret society that believes a corporate logo holds the key to life's mysteries.

Then, things get really wonky. Clay borrows a car from a friend whose eyes have been replaced with wriggling crustaceans. He's taken into custody by two policemen who go on to arrest and rape a three-eyed treelike woman in front of him. Coupled with the mystery of the fate of Clay's girlfriend, "Velvet Glove" leaves the reader feeling breathless and unsettled, like waking up from a bad dream.

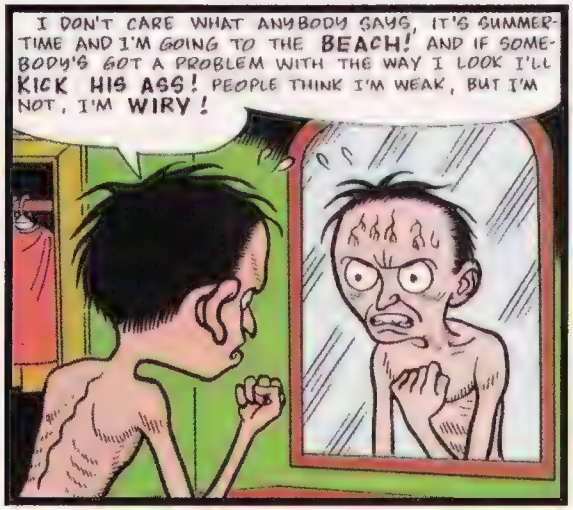
In the time it takes to turn the page, Clowes has the ability to shift gears from the bizarre to the everyday. His eight-part serial story, "Ghost World" (appearing in issues #11-#18), guides the reader back to firmer, more realistic ground dealing with two young women named Enid and Becky, and how their friendship dissolves over the course of a summer. Taking into account the high-weirdness and enormous cast of "Velvet Glove," a story of friends drifting apart seems to be a drastic departure. "As I was finishing up 'Velvet Glove,' I wanted to do a story that was really pared down; the simplest storyline possible, without using the obviously off-kilter imagery to capture the audience's attention. I wanted the characters to stand alone and drive the story."

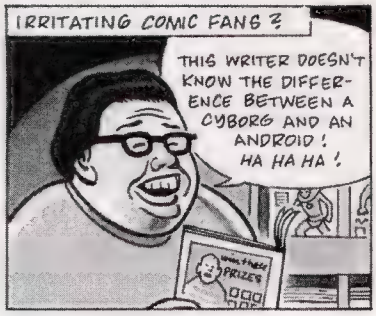
It's in "Ghost World" that Clowes shows he can create characters as real and believable as that ol' cute, brainy girl from school, and contrast her against a beak-nosed dog-man who lurks in the bushes of the local park. And if Becky and Enid seem real, it can be chalked up to Clowes' intense study of the female form in high school. "I was really shy back then and girls treated me like I was invisible. I took advantage of this and observed them closely; I had access to how girls really talked and ingrained it. Writing for Enid and Becky was very natural to me—it almost scares me," he laughs.

As readers follow Becky and Enid's daily routines, there's a tangible sense of prying into these girls' private lives, sort of like eavesdropping on real people. And soon, a much larger audience may be made privy to the secret life of Becky and Enid—major Hollywood studios are considering optioning "Ghost World."

Coupled with the fantastical and the slice-of-life stories is a heaping dose of biting satire, something Clowes doles out in great quantities. In the case of young Dan Pussey (pronounce it

BY JENNIFER MOORE




**PUMPING IRONY** "Ectomorph" (left) sends up the Charles Atlas ads of old, while Clowes is not afraid to poke fun at his own readers in "I Hate You Deeply" (above).

## THE HYPE

**NAME:** *Eightball*
**SCOOP:** You name it, *Eightball*'s got it
**WHY YOU'LL DIG IT:** Imagine the strangest thing in the world and Clowes will beat it. His comic is TV's "The Wonder Years" meets "The Real World" meets "Twin Peaks."

"Poo-say," ye of the dirty mind), Clowes tells the tale of a penciler in the Infinity Comics Group who rises to stardom. Dan's adventures—which appear in issues #1, #3, #4, #6, #10, #12 and #14—show the comics industry at its worst, warts and all, from its crass commercialism to its assembly-line attitude. "All the most sleazy practices of business have been done in comics," Clowes says, "like the whole exploitation of the collectors' market in the early '90s, preying on people's greed, or how creators like [Jerry] Siegel and [Joe] Shuster never saw a dime from the success of Superman."

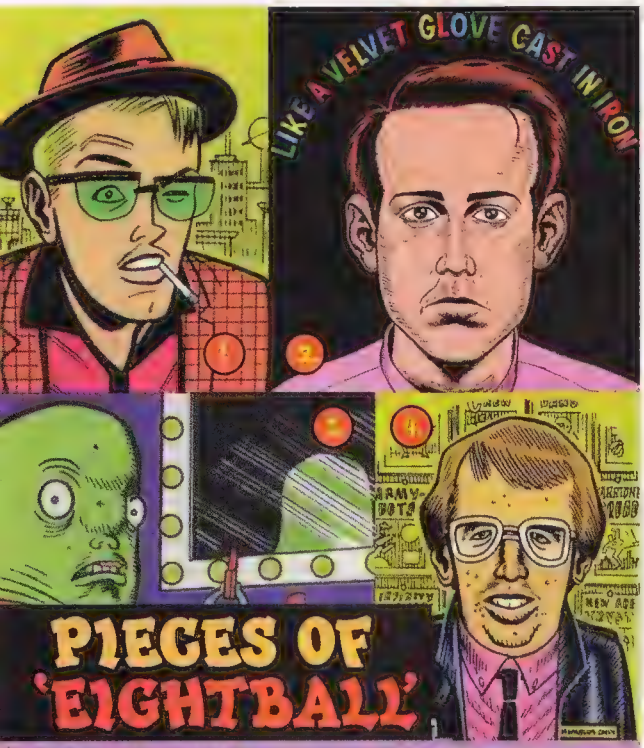
Here, *Eightball* stands out as a rebellious oddity. Clowes even satirizes his own publisher Fantagraphics, holding his editor up as a bitter, unpredictably cruel bully. "They deserve it," he laughs. "Everyone in the comic industry is worthy of some sort of ridicule." In other stories, most notably issue #2's "I Hate You Deeply," hosted by his hipster character Lloyd Llewellyn (star of Clowes' first Fantagraphics comic *Lloyd Llewellyn*), Clowes even levels some derision upon himself. Llewellyn cites "people who hide behind cartoon characters to espouse their unpopular opinions" as one of the many things that cheese him off. He even goes so far as to portray himself as a cowardly phony, conning his audience into relating to him.

Getting personal—and venomous—in his work is no problem for Clowes, especially when it comes to his aggressively opinionated comedy. In the "I Hate You Deeply" strip, the author details his loathing for everything from actors to British musicians. In fact, most of Clowes' stories are laden with the author's internal monologues. In issue #8's "My Suicide," Clowes debates the pros and cons of killing oneself, and "Marooned on a Desert Island with the People on the Subway" (issue #6) deals with the author's speculations on...well...being marooned on a desert island with the people on his subway.

As Clowes plumbs the depths of his consciousness, his art calls to mind the ad art of the late '50s and early '60s. The squared-off simplicity of his lines, coupled with the predominantly black-and-white format, gives his stories a distinctively retro feel. "I prefer the preciseness of the style, where you can't really tell what the artist is trying to say just by looking at it," he notes. "The image has a sort of deadness to it which requires the reader to energize it."

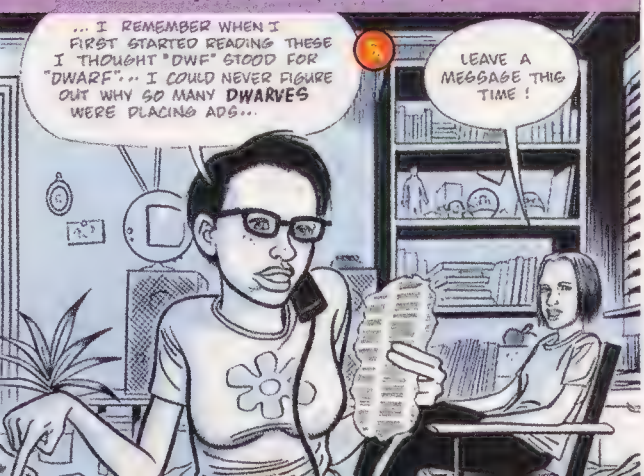
To energize his series, Clowes continually shifts gears—and, as the *Eightball* bounces, new things are afoot. The title will temporarily abandon its anthology format for a three-issue mini-series, the first installment (in issue #19) being 40 pages long. According to Clowes, this story will be an erotic thriller, following a young man's excursion into the sexual underground. "The plot takes our main character to many different locations as he goes through many different stages in his life." And, for someone who's so open about his opinions and frailties in print, Clowes is maddeningly closed-mouthed about the details of his new project. "To give too many details would spoil the story. I haven't told anyone about it—not even my publisher!"

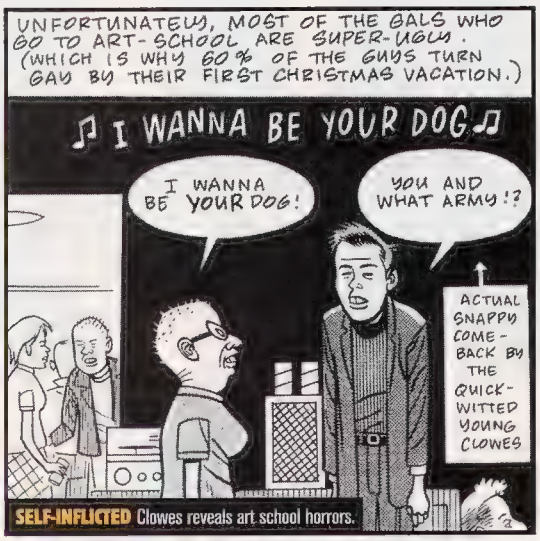
And if you believe Clowes, his publisher doesn't even deserve to know.




## PIECES OF 'EIGHTBALL'

- **LLOYD LLEWELLYN** Lloyd is the hero of Clowes' first comic series with Fantagraphics, and often makes cameos as a spokesperson for the author's opinions.
- **CLAY LOUDERMILK** The protagonist of "Like a Velvet Glove Cast in Iron," Clay searches for an ex-girlfriend he sees in a bizarre adult film.
- **TINA** A horribly deformed, yet sweet-natured girl who harbors a crush on Clay in "Velvet Glove." Tina lives with her domineering mother.
- **YOUNG DAN PUSSEY** A penciler at the fictitious Infinity Comics Group who rises to stardom, Dan is the instrument through which Clowes delivers his critical commentary on the state of the comics industry.
- **ENID AND BECKY** Two high-school friends who slowly grow apart over the course of the story "Ghost World." (Enid's on the left.)




**SELF-INFLICTED** Clowes reveals art school horrors.

*New York-based freelance writer Jennifer Moore, after tea and cakes and ices, often has the strength to force the moment to its crisis.*

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# School Daze

**Alumni of the Joe Kubert School look back to their days in class and what they learned from the masters**

By Craig Shutt

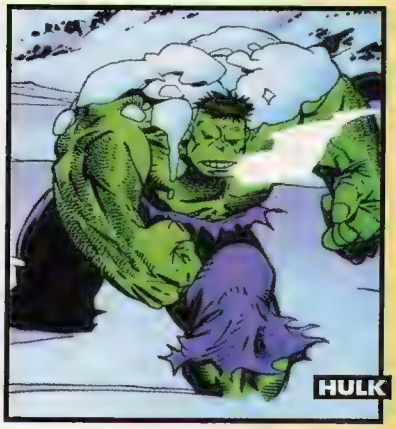
Ask just about any student from the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art what they're gonna do when they graduate and you'll probably get the same answer: become a comic book penciler. Well, less than a quarter of them are right. More than anything else, the school teaches there's a lot more to cartooning than superhero comics. Mostly, there's a lot of hard work.

"A guy who works as a cartoonist has to know a hell of a lot about a lot of things that apply to the commercial-art field in general," explains Joe Kubert, legendary comic book artist and founder of the school located in Dover, N.J. "Once students see the possibilities in storyboarding in animation or movies, children's books, advertising and other fields, they often go in a different direction than they'd planned."

However, many students do wind up drawing comics professionally. And many famous comic creators who have made that jump from the school remember their time there fondly. Like the pros who comprise the faculty, they were willing to share some of the lessons they learned as full-time students of the 'biz.

## Adam Kubert

**GRADUATED:** 1984
**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:** *Wolverine* (Marvel); *Batman vs. Predator* (DC); *Ghost Rider/Blaze: Spirits of Vengeance* (Marvel)
**CURRENT WORK:** Marvel's *Incredible Hulk* through June's #467, then a four-issue stint on *X-Men* #81-#84; exterior drawings for Marvel Island of Adventure at Universal Studios Theme Park (opening late 1999); "three view" drawing for a Captain America sculpture hitting in May.
**KUBERT SCHOOL DAZE:** "It was a lot different for me than for other kids. There was no such thing as missing an assignment or a day of class. I was uncomfortable at first, because I didn't want anyone to know my name. But after a while it got easier. People spit on me just like everyone else, so I felt right at home."
**BIGGEST LESSON LEARNED:** "Always vary the size, angles and perspectives of shots on the page to keep it interesting. That was stressed by almost all the teachers, and I consciously try to do that all the time."


HULK

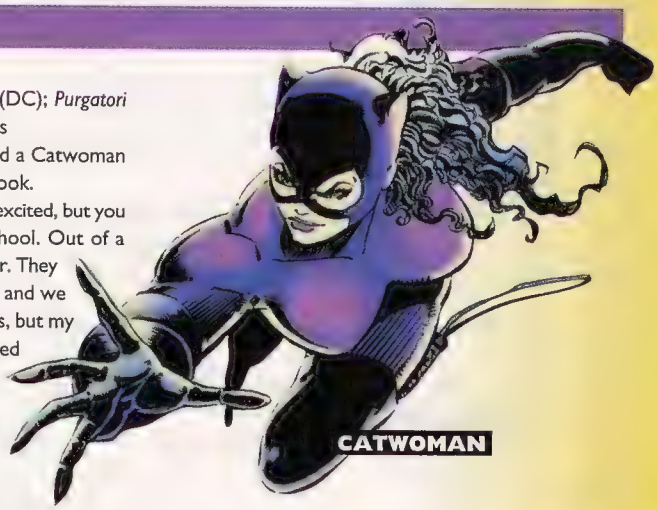
## Andy Kubert

KA-ZAR

**GRADUATED:** 1984
**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:** *Ka-Zar* (Marvel) *X-Men* (Marvel); *Sgt. Rock* (DC); *Adam Strange* mini-series (DC)
**CURRENT WORK:** Marvel's *Captain America* starting with May's #7; working on developing a penciling course for a Kubert School correspondence course.
**KUBERT SCHOOL DAZE:** Andy didn't originally plan on becoming a cartoonist. He enrolled to really learn the ropes, so he could join the school's staff. "I'd never been much interested in drawing, so when I got to the school, I sucked. I was really bad. But I didn't plan to be an artist, so it didn't matter." After six months, however, things clicked, and he changed his career goals. "Good thing for nepotism!"
**BIGGEST LESSON LEARNED:** "If you get stuck deciding how to pose a shot, pretend you have a camera and are circling around the scene, looking for the best picture to take. I still use that approach when I get stuck."

## Jim Balent

**GRADUATED:** 1984
**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:** *Catwoman* (DC); *Purgatori* (Chaos!); portfolio for Sal Q Productions
**CURRENT WORK:** DC's *Catwoman* and a Catwoman piece for an upcoming DC 3-D pin-up book.
**KUBERT SCHOOL DAZE:** "I was very excited, but you really had to bring something to the school. Out of a class of about 100 kids to start, we graduated about 15 that year. They threw a lot at us as we went along, almost like a boot camp, and we had to burn away a lot of the slag. I had a lot of good teachers, but my favorite class was on storytelling. I still use a lot of what I learned there today."
**BIGGEST LESSON LEARNED:** "The importance of deadlines. We're in a business, and we have to put out books. I always knew that to help out editors and myself, I had to get as fast as possible without hurting the quality."


CATWOMAN

ADAM KUBERT PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIRALDI; ANDY KUBERT PHOTO BY CRAIG BLANKENHORN; JIM BALENT PHOTO BY MATT SHAUSE

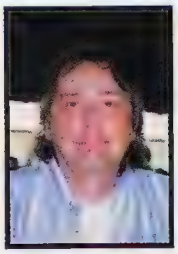
## Stephen Bissette

**GRADUATED:** 1978
**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:** *Saga of the Swamp Thing* (DC); *Taboo* (SpiderBaby Graphix/ Kitchen Sink); *Aliens: Tribes* (Dark Horse)
**CURRENT WORK:** A 90-page *Tyrant* graphic novel in late 1998, and co-authoring a novelization of the 1958 sci-fi movie cult classic "Fiend Without a Face."
**KUBERT SCHOOL DAZE:** "The school was unlike anything I could have imagined. I had been in a fine-arts school, and the head of the department warned me that I might not cut it in such a competitive environment, so I was really intimidated. But it was quite the opposite. I was incredibly comfortable with the people. It was laid-back but intense, too—we were eating, breathing and sleeping comics, but that's why we were there."
**BIGGEST LESSON LEARNED:** "To survive in this business, you really have to take the bull by the horns and learn all aspects of it. You can't survive by just refining your technical skills. As a result, I'm not afraid of any aspect—drawing, publishing or self-publishing."

SWAMP THING

## Rick Veitch

MAXIMORTAL



**GRADUATED:** 1978
**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:** *Bratpack* (King Hell Press); *Swamp Thing* (DC); *Rare Bit Fiends* (King Hell Press); Maximortal (King Hell Press)
**CURRENT WORK:** Penciling flashback sequences in Awesome's *Supreme* at least through September's #63.
**KUBERT SCHOOL DAZE:** "The school helped me 'unlearn' all the things I'd picked up by being self-taught. It peeled that away and helped me get down to the basics of how to make an illustration."
**BIGGEST LESSON LEARNED:** "How to focus. I had a lot of energy, but it wasn't getting onto the page. Watching Joe [Kubert] was amazing. Even if 20 people were asking him questions, he could focus on his drawing like a laser beam. I started to imitate that, and I've got it now."

## Tim Truman

**GRADUATED:** 1981
**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:** *Hawkworld* mini-series (DC); *Jonah Hex: Two-Gun Mojo* (Vertigo); *Jonah Hex: Riders of the Worm and Such* (Vertigo); *Scout* (Eclipse); *Turok, Dinosaur Hunter* (Valiant)
**CURRENT WORK:** DC's four-issue *Guns of the Dragon*, featuring Bat Lash and Enemy Ace, launching in August.
**KUBERT SCHOOL DAZE:** "The first year was very scary, mostly because I thought I was better than I was. It was different from any other school I'd gone to because I was being instructed by people who were in the business, like Joe Kubert and Dick Giordano. The third year was amazing, really phenomenal because I came to terms with my limitations, and I got my mind right about using my talent to make a living."
**BIGGEST LESSON LEARNED:** "On every job, bring something back in addition to the work—a story idea, an extra drawing, something. For years, I used that as a rule of thumb, and it got me a lot of work."

HAWKWORLD

STEPHEN BISSETTE PHOTO BY BETH GWINN; RICK VEITCH PHOTO COURTESY OF RICK VEITCH; TIM TRUMAN PHOTO COURTESY OF TIM TRUMAN

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## Tom Mandrake

**GRADUATED:** 1979
**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:** *New Mutants* (Marvel); *Batman* (DC); *The Spectre* (DC); *Firestorm* (DC)
**CURRENT WORK:** Finishing up DC's *The Kents* with May's #12 and a new *Martian Manhunter* ongoing series debuting in August.
**KUBERT SCHOOL DAZE:** "It was kind of like spending two years at a comic book convention. Everyone was drawing all the time, and pros were stopping by to talk with you. The toughest thing to realize was that they were telling us the truth about how hard it was to make a living and what kind of horror stories could happen. We all just ignored that, figuring it wouldn't happen to us. Later on, when something would happen to us, we'd look back and realize they'd warned us about exactly what had just happened."
**BIGGEST LESSON LEARNED:** "The thing that meant the most to me was the friends I made, including meeting my wife [Jan Duursema]. We formed a support system that helped us after we were out looking for work. There was always some jealousy when somebody got a good job, but we also knew we were rooting for each other too."

MARTIAN MANHUNTER

## Jan Duursema

**GRADUATED:** 1979
**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:** *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* (DC); *Warlord* (DC); *Professor Xavier and the X-Men* (Marvel); *X-Factor* (Marvel); *Incredible Hulk* (Marvel)
**CURRENT WORK:** Penciling Acclaim's *Troublemakers* #18 in May and DC's *Nightwing* "Tangent" book in July.
**KUBERT SCHOOL DAZE:** "It was a great place if you wanted to draw all your life, which both Tom [Mandrake, now her husband] and I did. Nobody ever came by and yelled at you to stop doodling! It was very exciting for me, because I'd gone to a fine-arts program and graduated knowing I couldn't make a living. Going to the Kubert School offered the challenge of knowing I'd come out trained to make a living, and that was very exciting."
**BIGGEST LESSON LEARNED:** "When you're laying out a page, keep the camera moving around and don't stand still or it gets boring."

*When Joe Kubert wasn't looking, Chicago-based writer Craig Shutt scammed a diploma and is scheduled to pencil X-Men. Wait'll Marvel sees the "new" Wolverine.*

X-FACTOR

TOM MANDRAKE PHOTO COURTESY OF TOM MANDRAKE; JAN DUURSEMA PHOTO COURTESY OF JAN DUURSEMA

# Making the Grade

So you're finally interested in going to school, huh? Well, who wouldn't, if the school you're talking about is the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art? Yep, the Kubert School is an actual learning institution where they teach you all about drawing comic books and other neat stuff.

Originally started as a two-year program and now featuring a three-year schedule, the Kubert School is said to be the country's only accredited program offering a curriculum focused on comic book and cartoon art. Even cooler, all courses are taught by professionals, who must be active in the field they teach. That means real-life, flesh-and-blood comic creators are your teachers. Sounds keen, but be warned: it's no day at the doodling beach. Each school day consists of two three-hour courses repeated weekly, with the 10-course curriculum intensifying each year. First-year curriculum includes such courses as Paste-up & Mechanicals, Lettering, Layout, Basic Drawing, Methods & Materials and Design. And then there's the homework—which can take as long as classroom time. Most students draw eight-to-10 hours per day, six or seven days a week.

Sounds scary? Absolutely. Not to mention the fact that not everyone who enters the program makes it through the full three years. Out of an class of about 110 each year, only 40 or so actually graduate. However, a sizable number of students leave because they've already started receiving regular assignments, not because they can't hack it. The school also offers a placement service for job offers and assignments that come in from many diverse fields. "We stress to the students that it's critical for them to maintain contact so we can help them take that step into the real world of making a livelihood," says school founder Joe Kubert.

As far as getting in to the school, applicants must present a portfolio containing a minimum of 15 pieces—including color and mixed media, plus cartoon work—and go through two interviews before even being considered for admission. Regarding tuition, fees and art supplies, expect to shell out roughly $9,000 a year. There are, however, a number of scholarship programs available—including a full three-year annual scholarship from Marvel—and qualified students are eligible for Federal Pell Grants and various student loan programs.

**For more information, please write to:**

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# THE MAN IN THE IRON

By Matthew Brady

# MASK

## Kurt Busiek and Sean Chen tell why billionaire playboy Tony Stark risks life and limb as the rough 'n' tumble IRON MAN

**TWO-FACE** Low-key businessman by day, Tony Stark becomes an armored enforcer when he dons the costume of Iron Man.

Billionaire playboy. Devastatingly smart. A costumed hero striking fear in the hearts of criminals. No, we're not talking about Bruce Wayne. We're describing Tony Stark, a.k.a. Iron Man. But like the Dark Knight, Stark's personality undergoes a transformation. A low-key businessman by day, when Stark dons a suit of armor he becomes a powerhouse enforcer who can single-handedly take out the Hulk. He's buff, he's tough and he knows it. And his new creative team knows it too, emphasizing the difference between the dual identities.

"Tony has to negotiate through a minefield of corporate dealings with finesse," *Iron Man* writer Kurt Busiek says. "He's got to have charm and grace to keep himself functioning. Iron Man, on the other hand, is a tank. He doesn't waltz through minefields, he rolls over them. Tony has to find delicate solutions, whereas Iron Man can put his fist through things."

Just as putting on a mask changes how the world views you, putting the Iron Man faceplate on changes how Stark views the world. "As Iron Man, Tony puts on a different face—figuratively and literally," Busiek says. "It's the same mind, but people, even heroes who know who he is under the armor, treat him differently and have different expectations of him. He interacts with the world differently as Iron Man, and that makes him show a very different face. He's much tougher, much more arrogant than Tony would ever dream of being."

The differences between the two are something that *Iron Man* penciler Sean Chen works to get across in the art as well. "I handle them as two different characters," Chen admits. "I don't picture Tony Stark inside the Iron Man outfit. Basically, I'm drawing a different person when I draw Iron Man. That works because there's a whole side of him as Iron Man that he's not able to express as Tony. Just as they're almost two separate personalities, I try to draw them as two distinct characters. If you look at it, you can see that there is no way Tony could fit into the armor. I really do bend reality a little and treat them as totally separate characters."

**But why does he do it?** Why does Stark—one of the 10 richest men in the Marvel Universe, a man who has power, respect and a handful of charities that he generously supports—risk life and limb as Iron Man?

"Chivalry," say Busiek. "If you want a simple buzzword for why Tony does it, that's it. Chivalry is the code of conduct that says that the nobility must be nice to those less fortunate, because that's how a good person acts. If you have honor, that's what you do and Tony's got bags of honor."

beat him while in his armor—that gets his pulse racing too."

Despite his honorable intentions, Iron Man can still be one of the more misunderstood heroes out there simply because since his first public appearance, Stark has told the world that Iron Man is an employee of his, a situation that can result in some unique reactions from other heroes and the guy in the street. "The heroes that know Tony's secret, generally respect him as a hero," Busiek says. "They know he's Tony Stark, they know he's putting his life on the line the same way they are."

But when it comes to heroes and people out of the loop,

## "Tony's got to have charm and grace. Iron Man, on the other hand, is a tank."

—Kurt Busiek, *Iron Man* writer

Responsibility also factors into the equation. "Just as the Carnegies and the Rockefellers gave back to the world some of their wealth, Tony feels that same responsibility. He sees it that he's been gifted with skills, abilities and wealth that few other people have, so he's got to use those resources in a good way, or else he's just being selfish."

Also, Busiek points out that for Stark, being Iron Man is a mix of a release from his boardroom life, as well as a chance to take on some irresistible challenges. "Tony likes to do things because they're challenging," Busiek says. "Designing an airplane that works better than any airplane ever made is not a dangerous challenge, but it gets Tony's pulse racing. Going up against Ultimo and finding a way to

there's a completely different attitude. "Among the heroes who don't know, there's a feeling of, 'This guy is just a mercenary,' running through their minds. For example, Spider-Man doesn't know he's Tony. He thinks that Iron Man is just a Stark employee. Spider-Man thinks it's a cushy job—he must get good pay, a vacation, and health insurance—everything Spider-Man wishes he had. He respects Iron Man the same way he would a firefighter, but at the same time, doesn't put him on the same level as Captain America. While in the public's eye, Iron Man's like the starting pitcher for the Mets. He may not always even be the same guy, but he's always doing the same job."

Adding to Stark's sense of responsibility is a new job: chief of the newly formed Stark Solutions, an international trouble-shooting company that will solve any problem—for the right price.

Stark's wanting to solve problems comes from a need on his part to make amends. "Tony is in a situation where he feels responsibility for what happened in 'Avengers: The Crossing' [the 1994 storyline where Stark went nuts and became a killer], and what happened with 'Onslaught' [a 1996 crossover that saw the presumed death of all the Avengers and Fantastic Four]," Busiek says. "As he sees it, he failed to do his job as an Avenger, and failed in his self-appointed mission as Iron Man, and he's gotta make good on that. Tony's at an interesting place right now mentally, and I think it is more fun to put him into a down-to-earth situation rather than go back to the status quo at Stark-Fujikawa [his

**FOUR-PLAY** Tony is four guys in one, according to Busiek: An inventor, a businessman, a ladies' man and adventurer.

former company that was seized during his absence due to 'Onslaught']."

## As for the future of Iron Man?

Busiek guarantees that traditional *Iron Man* elements such as Stark being an international playboy and Iron Man's specialty armors will be back, but one ghost from the past won't resurface: Stark's alcoholism. "I've read enough 'drunk Tony' stories to last me a good long while," Busiek says. "As far as I'm concerned Tony's on the wagon. It's not an easy thing to do, but again, it's just one of the many challenges he faces on a daily basis."

Story-wise, Stark's just finished with the new Firebrand, and is still trying to figure out just who is pulling the strings behind these attack waves aimed at his interests and Iron Man himself.

"*Iron Man* #6 teams Tony up with the Black Widow in Australia to battle a new villain," Busiek says. "Issue #7 kicks off the 'Live Kree or Die' storyline that'll run through *Iron Man*, *Captain America* and *The Avengers*. It's a story that focuses on Kree commandos who want revenge on the Earth for what happened in 'Operation: Galactic Storm.'" ("Galactic Storm" was a 1992 crossover where a few Avengers, including Iron Man, murdered the Kree's leader the Supreme Intelligence.)

Stark's back on the trail of the mystery villain in France in issue #8, going up against the new and improved Whiplash. The mystery villain will finally be revealed in issues #9 and #10 and, thanks to the confrontation that follows, Stark takes #11 and #12 to recover.

In the long run, look for a recurring role for the Black Widow, contingent on Kevin Smith's plans for her over in *Daredevil*. Also, Busiek promises returns for the Controller, Madame Masque, and a Crimson Dynamo who's more in line with the character's original, energy-based, conception. And, of course, the Titanium Man will be showing up before too long. "We'll get to the Titanium Man sooner or later," Busiek says. "After all, it's an *Iron Man* tradition to have these two armored guys just beat on each other for about three issues in a row."

Along with the regular series, Busiek plans to do a little housecleaning later this year with *A Look Back in Armor*, a one-shot special that will explain just what happened to Tony in the rather bewildering "The Crossing" storyline, in which a murderous Stark was killed and replaced by a teenaged version of himself.

While the basic questions will be

**PACKING HEAT** Tony keeps his de-powered armor in his briefcase.


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# REALITY BYTES

## How real is Iron Man's armor?

### ARMOR MATERIAL

Unless he's looking for a serious hernia, Tony Stark may have to change his name to Carbon Man. "You'd probably want to make the armor out of a carbon fiber," Dr. Doug Fraser, research engineer at Dartmouth College says."Any metal would obviously be too heavy for a normal man to wear, and carbon fiber is much lighter than steel and almost equal in strength in many ways."

### BOOT JETS

"To get that kind of energy packed into a boot is a bit of fantasy," Fraser says. "However, the important point with boot jets is their direction, since if he moves during flight, the jets would have to be constantly angled to keep him moving in a straight line. Otherwise, if his center of gravity shifts, he'd just spin around like a Fourth of July firework."

### STRENGTH

Shell-head's exoskeleton is too small to supply the strength he exhibits. "We're starting to see exo-skeleton-type suits now, but they're just huge, and they need to be in order to generate the amount of force required."

### REPULSOR RAYS

Fraser says the rays would be too small to affect something at a distance, and they'd give a big-time kick. When shot, the rays would "react against him. It's the old physics problem of equal but opposite force."

### CYBERNETICS

Iron Man's mental control of the armor "is pretty consistent with what's being done in some fighter jets today," Fraser says. "It would give him a definite edge, since it would reduce his physiological response times of thinking of and performing an action. This way, he only has to think about it."

### POWER SOURCE

Complete fiction, according to Fraser. "For him to be able to do everything we've talked about, he'd have to have incredible amounts of power in the armor," Fraser says. "It could be electric, but batteries get pretty heavy. As for solar, the sun dumps one kilowatt of energy per square meter, and no one has been able to convert it with 100 percent efficiency, so a person-sized suit of armor couldn't absorb enough energy to make solar power viable. While it may not be very politically correct, he'd probably have to go nuclear to get the energy he needs."

### FINAL ANALYSIS

All in all, while Fraser admits that building the armor today is out of the question, someday, we all might have our own Iron Man outfits. "We have guys here who are building microchips that emit the energy of steam engines," Fraser says. "So far, they've been able to get the power of about eight engines on a single chip. So while Iron Man may not work with today's technology, things are happening to definitely make tomorrow a different story." ■MB

**TEEN ANGST** Wonder how teen Tony of two years ago became adult Tony? A one-shot in late '98 reveals all.

answered in the special, according to Busiek, "The Crossing" is much more important than anyone ever expected. "I've worked out some basics about the repercussions of 'The Crossing' that extend back almost to the beginning of Marvel history, and involve many more stories than what we saw," Busiek says. "It could turn out to be a big, sprawling epic that'll happen in chunks here and there until we build to a big revelation somewhere around *Avengers* #35 or #50. This is a big story."

With a bright future ahead for Stark, both Busiek and Chen are satisfied to keep plugging away at the monthly, something that both see themselves on for a long, long time. Chen summed up the appeal of the book for both creators. "It's a lot of books in one," Chen says. "It has a soap opera side, a superhero side, an adventurer side, a suave and debonair side and it all inhabits the real world. This is the book that both Kurt and I can work on in the style we want and never get bored."

---

*North Carolina-based writer Matthew Brady also has a soap opera side, a superhero side, an adventurer side, a suave and debonair side. It's a shame he's a comic character.*

**DID YOU KNOW** ...Iron Man once took out the Hulk by putting all his armor's power into one punch? (Pick up *Iron Man* (vol. 1) #131-#132 for the cool story.)

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# RINGS

# DES

## FOUR YEARS AFTER HAL JORDAN LOST THE GREEN LANTERN TITLE, THE KYLE RAYNER DEBATE RAGES ON

BY JAMES BUSBEE

**NEW vs. OLD** Who will win out as Green Lantern this summer—Hal (left) or Kyle?

These are the best of times for *Green Lantern*. Kyle Rayner's a charter member of the new JLA. Next month, his book hits the #100 milestone. And sales are way up. So why are so many *Green Lantern* fans seeing red?

Two words: "Hal Jordan."

Jordan is the former Green Lantern who was unceremoniously dumped from his own book in 1994, as he descended from hero to mass-murderer in the span of just three issues. Suddenly the so-called "Greatest Green Lantern Ever" was replaced by the young upstart, Rayner. Fans were outraged, and Jordan's subsequent Earth-saving self-sacrifice two years later did little to calm them. Now, roughly four years since the shake-up, fans are still torqued.

"We just care about our comics, and what has been happening in the last few years to them as the corporate monoliths manipulate and destroy legends to grab a few bucks through sensationalism," says Harry Phillipo, founder of the pro-Hal Jordan club H.E.A.T. (Hal's Emerald Advancement Team). To Phillipo and the thousands of other disgruntled fans, this isn't just sour grapes. This is war.

### ROUND ONE: FANS CRY FOR MARZ'S HEAD

Plain and simple, Green Lantern fans are among the most passionate in comics. They've also got more complex, shifting alliances than middle-school girls. Some are pro-Hal and anti-Kyle, some are pro-Kyle and know little about Hal, some liked Hal but believe his time has passed, and some just want everyone to get along. (See the sidebar on page 60 to see which Green Lantern fans dig more: Kyle or Hal.) What most of them share, however, is a conviction that Hal, a hero for nearly four decades, deserved better.

But better was just what *Green Lantern* editor Kevin Dooley had in mind when he hired up-and-coming writer Ron Marz in 1993. Sales on the title had slipped so much that DC's head honchos ordered drastic changes. Out was veteran Hal Jordan and the fabled Green Lantern Corps, leaving Marz with the daunting task of creating a replacement for Green Lantern.

Soon after Hal's descent into madness—in "Emerald Twilight," from *Green Lantern* (vol. 3) #48-#50—many of his fans banded together online to form H.E.A.T., seeking the exoneration and return of Hal Jordan. H.E.A.T.'s attack tactics offended many, particularly when the group called for the firing of Marz and Dooley. "H.E.A.T. took the position that Dooley and Marz wouldn't and couldn't bring back Hal Jordan, so a new creative team was necessary for the Green Lantern legend to return," says Phillipo. And then things turned ugly.

"I got death threats," says Dooley, still astonished. "They insulted my wife and they insulted my daughters. How are you supposed to react to that?"

"In some ways, you get a laugh out of it," says Marz, who still writes *GL*, "but you step back and think about it—I'd like to continue to feed my family and send my son to college. These guys are talking about my livelihood, and it's pretty cavalier of them to decide I should be fired."

## ROUND TWO: PRO-HAL FANS SOFTEN STANCE

Facing criticism from both Hal and Kyle fans, H.E.A.T. has, in recent months, backed off its more militant goals. The group's stopped calling for Marz and Dooley's heads, began to include pro-Kyle fans in its ranks, and even changed the "A" in its name from "Attack" to "Advancement." Pro-active H.E.A.T.ers have put their money where their mouths are—through donations, the group has raised and spent a few thousand dollars on a Website petition (www.glcorps.org) and a full-page ad in *Wizard* #77 seeking the return of Hal and the Corps. The petition has garnered close to 2,000 names, in part because H.E.A.T. calmed its anti-Kyle rhetoric.

"We are not asking for Kyle Rayner's replacement or his departure," says H.E.A.T.er Jack Grimes, who helped create glcorps.org and placed the *Wizard* ad. "That would be unfair to his fans and to his potential as a character. We believe that Hal and the Corps can easily coexist with Kyle in a universe as big as the DCU. We just want to be able to read about our own Green Lantern."

Reaction from DC to the petition's demands has been decidedly mixed. "I'm not going to say, 'Get a life,' because I love Green Lantern, and they love Green Lantern," Dooley says. "I admire them for being this sincere of fans. I do question how they went about it, though."

"To me, the fans have the same role as they do when you're watching TV, or a movie or sporting events," Marz says. "They're the audience. As a creator, I have to do what I think is right with the book. I can't be dictated to by the audience."

And if there's one spot an audience does have a say, it's with their wallets, which is just where Kyle's fans are speaking from. "Sales on the book went up by 300 percent [after "Emerald Twilight"], and there's an awful lot of Kyle fans now," Dooley says. "*Green Lantern* is consistently the most popular DC book that doesn't feature Batman or Superman."

**DISGRACED** GL fans saw red when Hal descended from hero to murderer in a span of only three issues.

**"As a creator, I have to do what I think is right with the book. I can't be dictated to by the audience."** —Ron Marz, creator of Kyle Rayner and current *GL* writer

## ROUND THREE: PRO-HAL'ERS JUST 'CAN'T GET OVER IT'

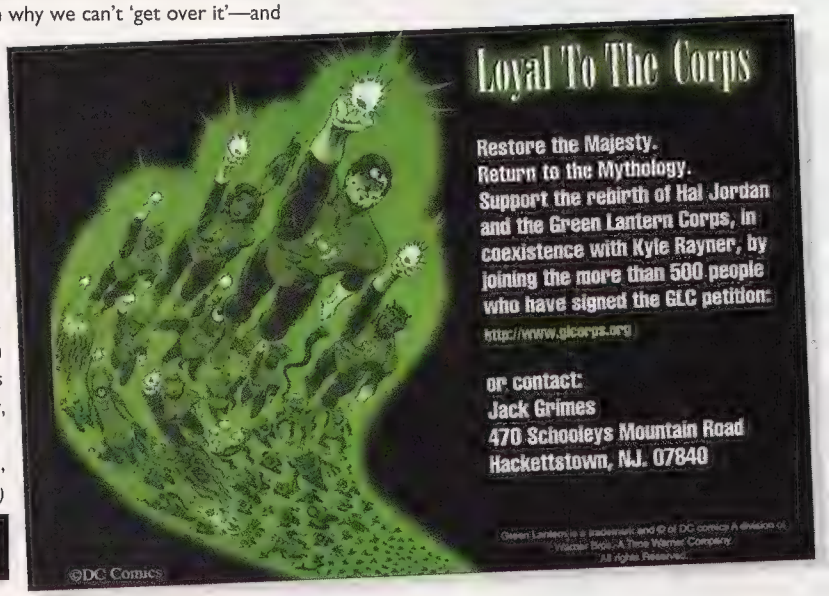
So why do Hal's fans keep on fighting for what is, after all, just a comic book? Might they be taking this whole "our hero Hal must return" business just a little too seriously? After all, it's been four years since the big change.

"The reason why we can't 'get over it'—and we've been told that many times—is that [previous *GL* creators] John Broome, Steve Englehart and Denny O'Neil made us care about these characters *so much* that not being able to experience them has taken away something that we enjoy," Grimes says. "We would back down if there wasn't a market for [Hal and the Corps], but we believe that there is."

On that point, H.E.A.T. may be correct. Indeed, DC now has it both ways—Kyle Rayner currently holds the title of Green Lantern, but the company continues to promote Hal Jordan products, like a statue and power ring, as well as having Hal appear in *JLA: Year One* and shortly, *Green Lantern* itself.

Beyond marketing and historical concerns,

*(continued on page 60)*




**TRUTH IN ADVERTISING!** The folks at H.E.A.T. placed this ad (at right) in *Wizard* to garner support for their cause.

# Point ○ Counterpoint

**Originally, we wanted to throw H.E.A.T. (Hal's Emerald Advancement Team) spokesman Jack Grimes and *Green Lantern* writer Ron Marz into a no-holds-barred steel cage match and let 'em work out their differences. But to avoid a lawsuit, we decided to handle the great Hal Jordan/Kyle Rayner debate in a more civilized manner.**

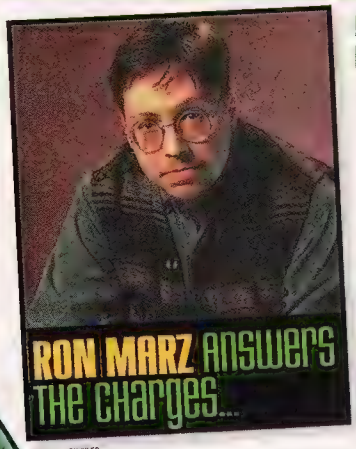



PHOTO J. SCHUYLER

**grimes:** Why can't Hal and Kyle coexist?

**marz:** Well, they can't coexist mostly because Hal's dead. It's the same reason we shouldn't have a Green Lantern Corps again. A character has to be unique in order for him to work, and if you do two books, one Hal and one Kyle, it weakens both of them.

**grimes:** We challenge DC to do a one-shot *Legends of the Green Lantern Corps*. It could be a great barometer for interest in the Corps.

**marz:** May's *Green Lantern Annual* #1 *(1963)* will have stories of Green Lanterns past. We're working on a hardcover with chapters on Alan Scott and Hal. Just because Hal is no longer Green Lantern doesn't mean we can't tell Hal stories.

**grimes:** Hal's departure into a villain was out of character, based on the sort of things we've seen over the last 35 years.

**marz:** Hal was always the guy sacrificing for others and never getting what he deserved personally. Then the thing most important to him–Coast City–was taken away. He wasn't there to save it, he wasn't there to even *attempt* to save it. So he snapped. Somebody who's real strait-laced might be more of a candidate to really go over the edge if they've been suppressing a lot of stuff for years.

**grimes:** Why did everything have to be destroyed just to make room for one character? We lost Oa, the Guardians, all those unique fantasy elements that made Green Lantern so mythological for 30 years.

**marz:** To my mind, having a bunch of other Green Lanterns who could basically do the same thing as Hal Jordan detracted from his character. His adventures never seemed terribly serious to me, because if Hal was in trouble, someone could always bail him out. There were 3,600 of these guys running around, and somebody had to have some free time. ■ **JB**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find out what it means

This April, the women of the DC Universe run wild in seven hard-hitting one-shots:

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though, much of the friction exists because there are fundamental differences of opinion on Green Lantern. Where Hal fans view the Corps as a star-spanning police force, Marz sees them as repetitive and dull. Where Marz considers Kyle a likable "everyman," pro-Hal'ers see him as a hero by virtue of dumb luck, rather than inherent worthiness. And then there's Hal.

"Hal represents the hero in all of us, like Indiana Jones or Chuck Yeager," says Grimes. "He has the bravery and willpower that inspire us to triumph over our problems."

"Frankly, I think the heroes who aren't the square-jawed studs are a lot more interesting," Marz counters. "Why bother reading about a guy who has no doubts about being a hero, no weaknesses or foibles to his character?"

Marz further cites *Green Lantern*'s own history to add to his stance. "One of the big things that appeals to me [about *Green Lantern*] is the generational, cyclical sort of thing. The torch gets passed from guy to guy to guy. The torch passed from Alan [Scott, the Golden Age GL from the late '40s] to Hal to Kyle. 'Green Lantern' is whoever has the ring. It's like when you root for a baseball team—you don't stop rooting for that team just because your favorite player has retired."

## ROUND FOUR: HAL'S BACK, BUT FOR HOW LONG?

Next month, in what may be comics' worst-kept secret of the year, Hal Jordan returns to *Green Lantern*—or, more properly, *Green Lantern* returns to Hal Jordan. After a time-travel mishap, Kyle finds himself in the midst of the initial Hal/Sinestro battle from 1961's *GL* (vol. 2) #9.

"I came up with the notion that #100 should be the story that everyone wanted to see," Marz says. "Beyond that, it was also a way to do a story in which Kyle experiences a lot of the trappings of *Green Lantern* that he wouldn't otherwise have a chance to experience—the Guardians, Oa, the Corps, Sinestro."

As part of Kyle's immersion in the *GL* mythos, #100 holds a special moment for Dooley. "The issue will have Kyle saying the GL oath in a scene that brought a tear to this GL fan's eye, and we'll see a lot more of the GL Corps than was originally shown in *GL* #9," he says.

After #100, *Green Lantern* goes biweekly for three months, beginning the six-issue "Emerald Knights" story arc where Hal accidentally returns with Kyle to the present. And for three issues, Hal will actually get his own book back—the even-numbered issues of the arc will be devoted to him. As for whether he'll stay around after "Emerald Knights," "Well, that would be telling, wouldn't it?" Marz laughs.

So this summer, everyone will get what they want, and perhaps all will be calm in the world of *Green Lantern*. Just don't expect it to last. After all, as Marz notes, "Who knows how long it'll be before Kyle passes the ring along to someone else?" And Kyle's fans will have a whole new fight on their hands. W

*Tennessee-based freelancer James Busbee loves Ring Dings. Devil Dogs are just too dumed dry.*

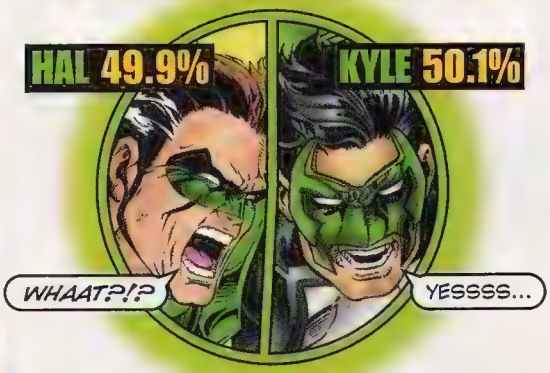
# FINAL COUNTDOWN

## AOL POLL!

**Green Lantern fans, the Hal Jordan vs. Kyle Rayner debate rages on! We asked you guys who you dig more through our Wizard World forum on America Online, and received 1,553 responses (a *Wizard* poll record)! Here's how it shook down:**

**THE ONE & ONLY** ...for now. Who knows how long it'll be before Kyle gets the boot as GL?

### WHO'S A BETTER GREEN LANTERN?




*"Hal was cool, but Kyle you can relate to," responded one fan. "I never bothered reading* Green Lantern *when Hal Jordan was there, but now I go out of my way to pick it up."*

*But a Hal Jordan loyalist claims, "Kyle's a whiner. What Ron Marz did to Hal Jordan is a travesty! Hal was a good, wholesome American boy, and now they messed him up good."*

**SHOULD HAL JORDAN BE RESURRECTED AND RECLAIM THE GREEN LANTERN ROLE?**
No (70%) or Yes (30%).

**SHOULD THE GREEN LANTERN CORPS RETURN?**
No (51%) or Yes (49%).

**WAS HAL JORDAN'S DEATH/SACRIFICE IN *THE FINAL NIGHT* HANDLED PROPERLY?**
Yes (66%) or No (34%). ■ **Matthew Senreich**

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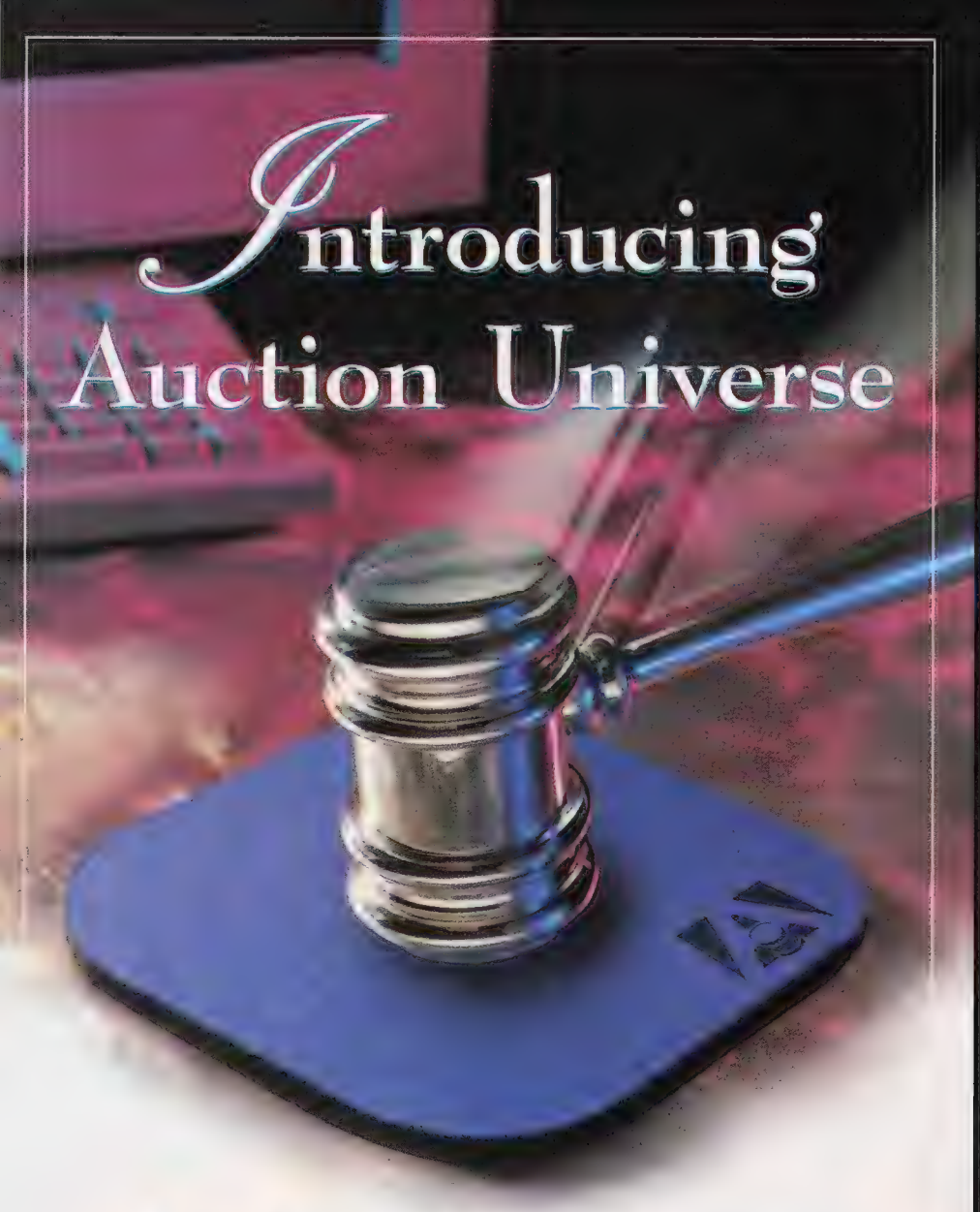

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UNDER PRES

# SURF

## Two previous JLA incarnations have failed because of an expanded roster and numerous spinoffs. Is the current 'JLA' series headed down the same path?

**BY THE WIZARD STAFF WITH MATTHEW BRADY**

### The JLA is doomed to fail.

It is if you believe that the past repeats itself. Right now, *JLA* is DC's best-selling title, featuring comics' mightiest superteam and hottest writer in Grant Morrison. Riding the wave, DC has plans for spinoff titles. The team has undergone a controversial roster change. And all of this could result in *JLA*'s cancellation.

At least it has happened that way before. Twice, in fact.

There was a 261-issue run that began in 1960, consisting of the biggest guns of the DC Universe banding together to battle threats too big for one superhero to handle. The title was canceled when stalwarts such as Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman were replaced on the book with non-entities such as Vibe, Gypsy and Vixen.

A Justice League relaunch in 1987 featured more recognizable heroes and a humorous tone to the adventures. 113 issues later, plagued by an oversaturation of spinoffs (*Justice League Europe*, *Justice League Quarterly*, *Justice League Task Force*, *Extreme Justice*) and key character departures, *JLA* went in the tank again.

Is the JLA Curse doomed to strike again? Or is DC primed to turn the superteam into its own version of the ultra-powerful X-Men franchise?

To get to the bottom of this, *Wizard* decided to play hardball with the *JLA* creative team of writer Grant Morrison and editor Dan Raspler, firing the tough questions and getting their honest responses. And for good measure, we provide our own answers to the same questions, applying a healthy mixture of fanboy enthusiasm and industry perspective.

### With the addition of seven new members, has the JLA grown too big?

**THEIR TAKE:** "I don't think so," Morrison says of the 14-member roster. "I wanted some new members added for a new dynamic, to get some women into the team as well, and add some psychological stuff. The JLA was a bit 'boys gang-ish' before, and I figured we need some women in there to give it a sense of being a bit bigger, a bit more rambunctious and interesting.

"I know some people are probably thinking that this has happened before, and we've seen the team get big and unwieldy and out of control, but I think I can manage it, so hopefully the fans will trust me, and we'll see what happens."

**TOO MANY COOKS** Is the JLA getting watered down?

**PINCH-HITTING FOR SUPERMAN...** Is Steel going to take the place of Superman? Let's hope not.

Raspler concurs: "The new members will be around, but will serve as specialists when needed."

**WIZARD'S TAKE:** No superteam seems to function well with more than seven members, with the notable exception of the X-Men. It just gets too unmanageable. Once you get past the original seven (Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Flash, Green Lantern, Aquaman and Martian Manhunter), the team gets watered down. And fans agree, the JLA should be the biggest and best of the DC Universe. With Steel, Orion, Big Barda, Huntress, Oracle, Plastic Man and Zauriel, now it only has half of that grandeur. And more members means less prime time for the key players.

And what about character interaction? Fans love to see the friendly rivalry between the Flash and Green Lantern, the "just beneath the surface" tension whenever Superman and Batman talk, the hot-headed Aquaman blowing off steam to the level-headed Wonder Woman. Aside from the Flash and GL, the interaction between the original seven hasn't exactly flourished. What's gonna happen when you mix in seven more members, especially when these characters don't have monthly solo books to flesh them out?

## Is 'JLA' trading Superman for Steel?

**THEIR TAKE:** "Not at all," Morrison says plainly. "The main seven will still be the focus and the guys of interest. Those are the big guns, and they're carrying the book, so none of them are going anywhere. With a larger team, I'll be a lot more likely to break the League into teams, which was one of the signatures of the Justice League in the past, and I'm really keen on doing that sort of thing. For instance, what happens when you put Plastic Man, Steel and Green Lantern together for a mission? That's what we can explore now with the new members."

Says Raspler, "The new guys [will never] diminish Batman or Superman's role in the League. They're here to stay. It's their League."

**WIZARD'S TAKE:** It sure looks that way. We understand that big-shot heroes who have their own solo titles can create continuity nightmares in a team book like *JLA*. And that the second-tier, title-less heroes like Steel (whose book ends with May's #52), Zauriel and Plastic Man can tend to become the focus due to the flexibility the JLA creators can have with them.

But however frustrating it is to keep the big shots around, no matter how tempting it is to toss out the headaches they cause...

DON'T DO IT. It's worth it all.

The JLA is dubbed "The World's Greatest Superteam," and that's what it should be: the biggest and best of the DC Universe, not the heroes that produce less creator headaches. Readers wanna see a JLA where Superman saves the day, *not* Steel.

## Can the JLA survive without Grant Morrison?

**THEIR TAKE:** "All it takes is somebody who loves the book," says Morrison. "Obviously, it's nice to be so identified with it, because I love the book, but I'm sure there are a lot of other good people out there. I'd love to see someone like [*X-Men* writer] Joe Kelly take it after me, for instance. If a good writer comes along, who's hopefully not influenced by me, but has their own take on it, the book will go on."

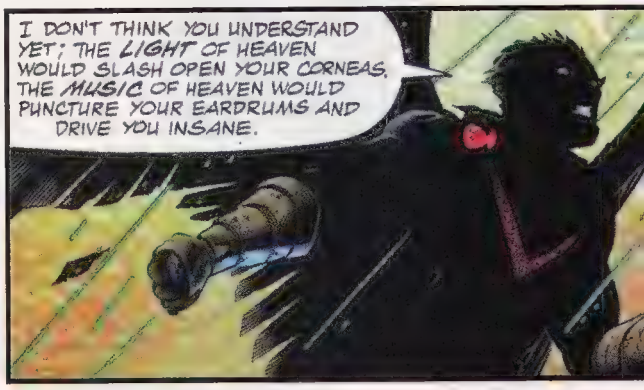
"It's still a couple of years down the line, so we'll cross that bridge when we get to it," says Raspler of a possible writer switch. "But my gut feeling says the JLA existed for a long time without Grant, and it will exist for a long time after Grant is gone."

**WIZARD'S TAKE:** The JLA will carry on with or without Grant Morrison because, c'mon, we're still talking about a team with Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman and DC's other shining stars. What *won't* carry on is the unique imagination of the stories that Morrison brings to the table. Morrison's inevitable successor is gonna have a tough time topping him, but you can bank on it—the JLA has the firepower for long-term success.

## Is the JLA turning into DC's X-Men?

**THEIR TAKE:** "I don't think so," says Raspler. "Obviously, the X-Men have experienced phenomenal success, but we're not going to come out with four monthly JLA side books. We're concentrating on the monthly, and we'll do a few special projects. It's all about quality, not quantity."

Morrison isn't so sure. "My feeling is yes," he says. "But there's nothing that I can do about it, because these decisions are made by marketing. If *JLA* is selling really well, then DC should apply the same creativity to the books that aren't selling really well and bring them up, rather than taking a book that is selling really well, and subdivide



it so it stops selling at all. Historically, it's been proven that if you try to milk a hit, you kill the hit."

**WIZARD'S TAKE:** DC is definitely positioning the JLA to be the company's version of the X-Men. Morrison senses it and so do we. Following the X-Men's lead, two *JLA* spinoffs are in the works (*Martian Manhunter* and *Young Justice* ongoings) and two are on the stands now (*JLA: Year One* and a *Young Justice* one-shot). And that's besides the completed *JLA: Paradise Lost* mini-series and the myriad of JLA guest appearances in lower-tier DC books to help boost these titles' sales.

So far, the JLA spinoffs have been entertaining and are selling well. If DC keeps things that way, Marvel's mutants had better watch their backs, 'cause the JLA definitely has the superstar superheroes to be #1.

## The JLA has defeated Heaven, Hell and a Martian invasion. Does a worthy opponent even exist?

**THEIR TAKE:** "Oh, yes," laughs Morrison. "My imagination works in a grand scale, so I've worked out every issue that I'm going to do, up to the last issue that I plan to do in 1999. And the menaces just get bigger and bigger. The last one will be just titanic, and picks up on a hint that Mark Waid dropped in *Justice League: A Midsummer's Nightmare* about a threat that's coming towards Earth. It's the biggest one that I ever thought of, and it will be on this huge scale."

"The JLA is a deterrent," explains Raspler. "We want them powerful so the bad guys see what happens to people who try to take over the world. The more powerful, the better. And if anyone is capable of coming up with imaginative new ways of challenging them, it's Grant."

**WIZARD'S TAKE:** We don't think so, fellas. The JLA has taken on a Martian onslaught, the hordes of Heaven and Hell, the reality-altering villain The Key and even repaired the entire space-time continuum! How do you top this stuff? You don't. It's the same obstacle movie sequels face. The well is gonna run dry if each issue is a running "Can you top this?" competition of opponents. Instead, the creative team needs to focus on more character interaction and more "human" opponents like Prometheus (who still trashed the team but good). That way, when a cosmic foe hits town, it won't compete against *last* issue's cosmic foe.

## Is Grant Morrison's Vertigo influence changing the way we look at superheroes?

**THEIR TAKE:** "To a certain extent, that's the way I think," the writer says. "I just like the fact that superheroes' powers can be used to do strange things that haven't been thought of before because science hasn't been applied in that way."

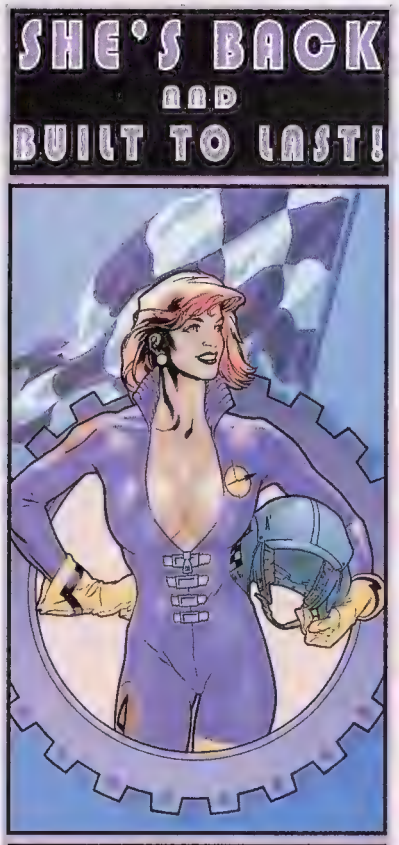
"I wouldn't call Grant's approach Vertigo-esque; it's imaginative and offbeat," says Raspler. "He's reminding people what superheroes could be."

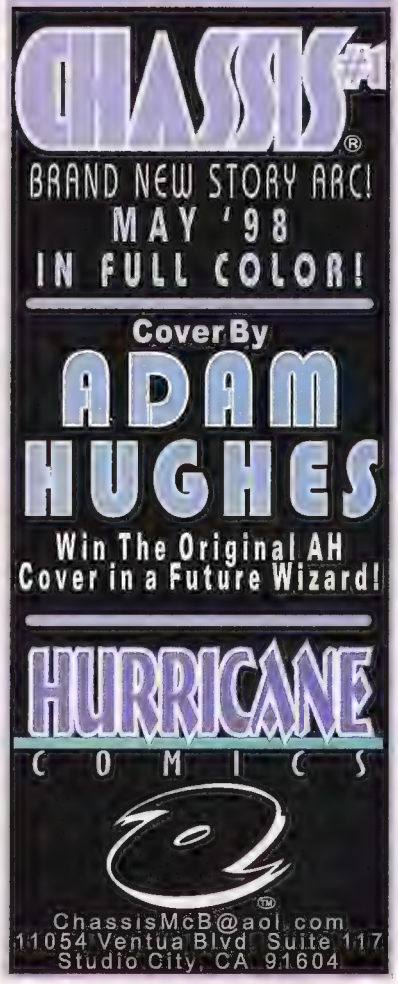
**WIZARD'S TAKE:** You betcha. Morrison's showing us that there's more to DC's big guns than merely slugging out bad guys. Batman's clever unveiling of the Hyperclan as Martians in *JLA* #3 was not only dramatic, it was *exciting*—something most comics miss the boat on. When all seemed lost for the team in issue #7 as the moon hurtled toward the Earth, a trapped Superman improvised to repel the moon away from the planet. (And that was only on page 6!) Morrison can even make a second-tier hero like the Atom cool as hell; in *JLA* #14, Darkseid had a forcefield up, but since he could see the Atom, the shrinking hero discovered he could ride a light-wave through the forcefield, beating the tyrant by attacking Darkseid's brain.

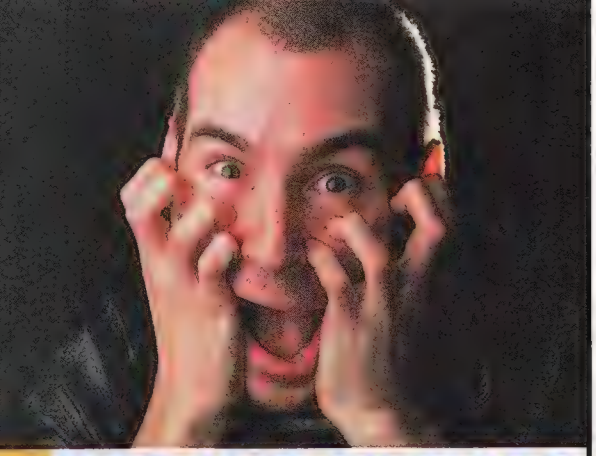
Don't look at Morrison's *JLA* as Vertigo Lite; it's Vertigo with spandex.

## Has 'JLA' become a comic book version of an Arnold Schwarzenegger film?

**THEIR TAKE:** "The Justice League has got to be big all the time," says Morrison. "People shouldn't get hung up if they don't understand a specific little part of the story; they should just hold on and enjoy the ride. Most of those one-line ideas are just cosmetic, just there to make the story more exciting, and





# THE JLA JUGGLE

**GRANT MORRISON MUST BE PULLING HIS HAIR OUT.**

In less than a year's time, the *JLA* writer (above) has seen the status quo of his books' stars go kablooey. Superman's changed his powers and costume. Wonder Woman was killed, resurrected into goddesshood and replaced. Batman got trapped in a Gotham City earthquake. The Flash was crippled (but Morrison has no excuse there–he co-wrote that story).

"In a lot of cases, I don't know about the changes until the last second," Morrison says. "With the Wonder Woman thing, I knew about Hippolyta [WW's mother and latest replacement], but I had no idea as to what her character would be like when I wrote the Prometheus issues [*JLA* #16-#17], so she's kind of sidelined in that. She gets a few lines, and a few things to do, but I didn't know enough about the character to feel comfortable fully including her."

But there is one built-in fudge factor. "The compressed time element of comics helps," Raspler says. "How long was Superman really blue? How long was Wonder Woman dead? A lot of times we can get around major problems by placing character events on either side of *JLA* events, such as in 'Rock of Ages' [*JLA* #10-#15, which followed Wonder Woman's 'death' inside continuity]."

> "In a lot of cases, I don't know about the changes until the last second."
> —GRANT MORRISON

But when it all comes down to it, both Morrison and Raspler agree that while the team members' changes may present occasional challenges, their priority is making *JLA* the best book it can be, something that may occasionally supersede individual characters' continuity. "I try to keep up with what's happening, and try to accommodate everything," Morrison says. "But at the same time, I have a vision of what the Justice League should be, and I'm trying to dovetail the continuity of the other books with that as best I can, but the JLA is my main focus. It's where all my energies are going."

"Are we sticklers for continuity?" Raspler asks. "We try to be if there's time, and if there's not time, then we bite the bullet and we let it go. Continuity is important. It's our skeleton, but it's a tool for us to use, not an anchor that will slow us down." ■MB

to give it more depth and more possibilities.

"I fill the issues with ideas because I've just got so many ideas all the time. I want to read a comic that has a thousand ideas on every page, because that's what I'm getting from my television, that's what I'm getting from MTV, and that's what's pervading every area of the culture. This is the new wave. These are the comics of the 21st century. Get ready for them."

**WIZARD'S TAKE:** Comics' greatest superteam *deserves* a Schwarzenegger-type pace. To keep up with the likes of Superman, Green Lantern and Flash, you have to have a action-packed plot and roller-coaster storylines, just like a Schwarzenegger film.

*JLA*'s story build-ups are usually spectacular, the stakes always high and, yes, problems come with the territory. The build-up to the Martian invasion was so spectacular that the quick resolution in issue #4 seemed forced. When Prometheus thoroughly kicked the JLA's collective butt by issue #17, his wimpy "Gee, maybe I underestimated you guys" disappearing act left a bad taste in our mouths. And we needed a bottle of Advil just to sort out the dozens of road maps necessary to follow the plot of "Rock of Ages" (#10-#15).

But y'know what? Even with all of its drawbacks, *JLA*, for the most part, entertains the hell out of us. Just like "The Terminator."

## The Wrap-Up

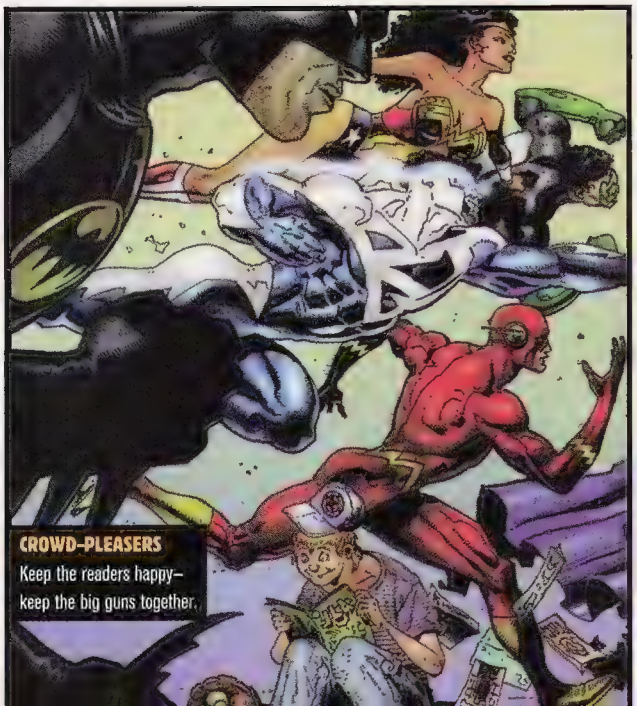
**IS THE JLA DOOMED TO FAIL? No way. Sure, the new roster calls for concern, spinoffs are hot 'n' heavy, and the stories can be difficult to follow. But despite all this, the book still engages readers like no other comic series.**

**As long as Team JLA heeds these Golden Rules, the series will enjoy a long and prosperous life:**

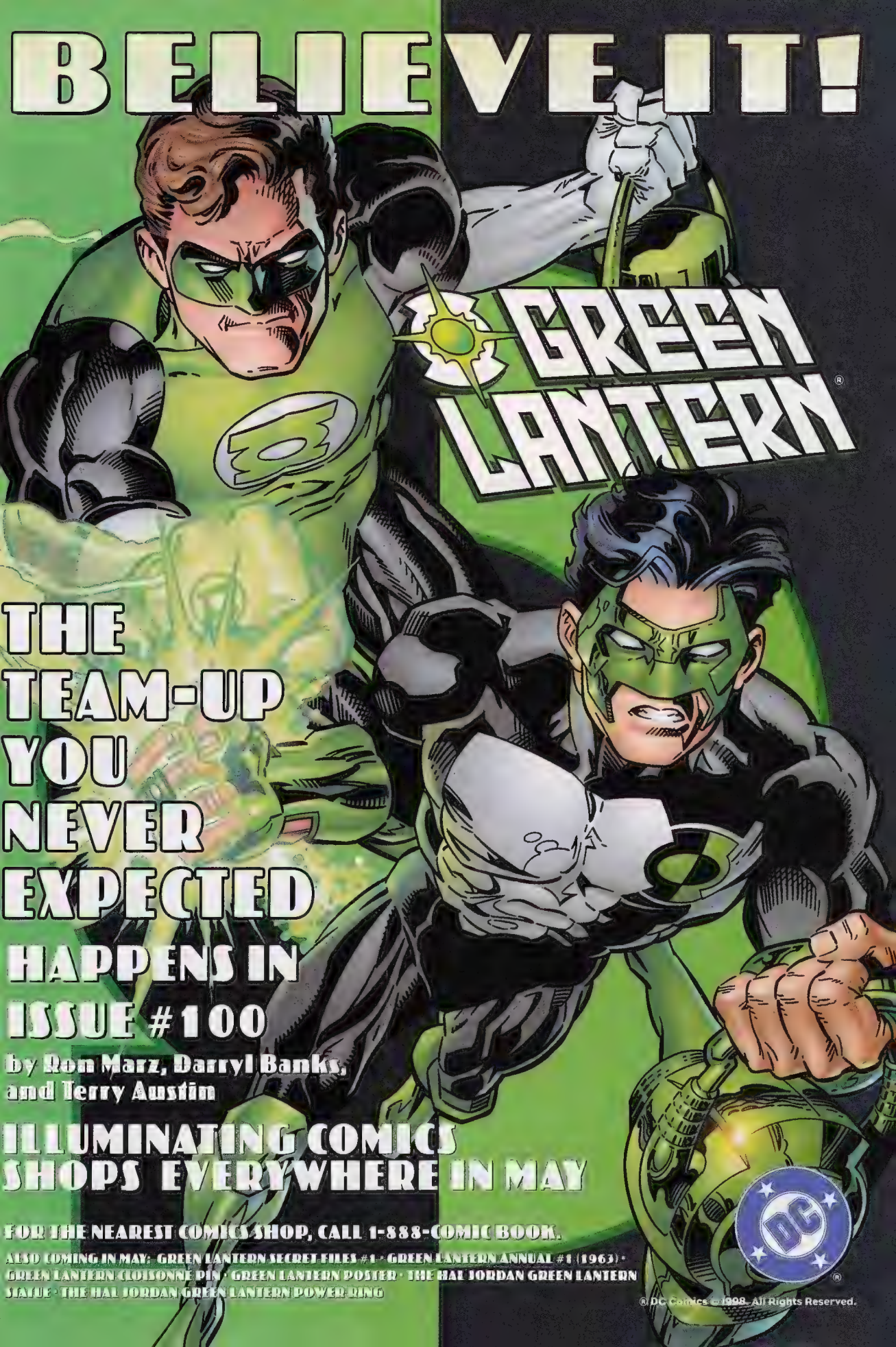
- **FOCUS ON THE ORIGINAL SEVEN BIG GUNS. The other supporting characters shouldn't just take a back seat—they should take another car.**
- **DON'T WIMP OUT ON STORYLINES. Go all the way like the breakneck Heaven/Hell story in *JLA* #6-#7 or not at all.**
- **MORE CHARACTER INTERACTION in between or during the action scenes. Fans can't get enough of this stuff.**
- **IF THERE HAVE TO BE SPINOFFS, *please* let 'em be entertaining. If not, "JLA" will come to mean "jack."**

**And if that happens? Then a third ongoing JLA series could go into the tank. And nobody wants to see that happen.** (W)

*The* Wizard *Staff is amazed its North Carolina-based buddy Matthew Brady can always decipher Grant Morrison's thick Scottish accent.*



**CROWD-PLEASERS**
Keep the readers happy–keep the big guns together.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# THE WIZARD Q&A

BY ADAM ROGERS • PHOTOS BY ACEY HARPER

In-your-face creator **ERIK LARSEN** unveils his changes for 'Aquaman,' how the Dragon won't fight Superman and why he wants Peter David's old titles

Erik Larsen is making the photographer very nervous. He's trying to shoot a picture in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, and an El Niño-powered storm is sweeping in, clouding out the sun. But Larsen, writer/artist of Image's *The Savage Dragon*, won't sit still. He has spied an 8-foot-tall statue of a sphinx—body of a lion, torso of a woman—and he is loping toward it. As the photographer readies his camera, Larsen folds himself alongside the statue's pedestal and—there's no easy way to say this—extends his tongue toward the sphinx's bared left nipple.

"Um, I don't think we want to do that one," says the photographer. He's fiddling with the green cellophane over his flash, designed to light Larsen to look like his creation, the Dragon.

"Okay," says Larsen. "How about this?" He climbs onto the pedestal and sits cross-legged, facing the sphinx. The scene looks innocent enough, though a bit ludicrous—a big, balding, goofy-lookin' guy facing down a statue. And then you notice his hands, which are cupping the sphinx's breasts. The photographer laughs, in a short burst. "Hey," Larsen says through a smile that wraps itself across the bottom of his face, "I'm just trying to be supportive."

Can we get a rimshot here? When you hang around with Larsen, you begin to wish you had a drum set, just to give the zingers the attention they deserve. And it's not just boob jokes, though he's got those, too (On his notoriously well-endowed female characters, with another sly smile: "I just plain like to draw big knockers."). A lot of the digs are pointed inward ("You can pretty much tell I'm editing myself by all the typos and spelling errors."), but there's plenty to go around. His opinions about other comic writers and artists—even his colleagues at Image, which he co-founded—are notorious. Larsen has maintained a famous letter-column feud with *Incredible Hulk* writer Peter David,

# ERIK larsen

**and his impression of *Spawn* mogul Todd McFarlane is dead-on. *The Savage Dragon* can be funny as hell; its creator is even funnier.**

**But don't start getting the idea that Larsen is *totally* wacky. You've got to be at least a little responsible to create, write and draw 50 issues of a single comic book series (as of June). Your sense of irony has to be a bit more finely honed than hooters humor if you're going to appreciate taking over writing tasks on *Aquaman*, formerly written by Peter David (Larsen steps in with that book's 50th issue). And you have to have a little class to resist the temptation to turn David's tenure on the book into a dream or something. "I won't be going out of my way to contradict or undo anything he did," Larsen says. But, he adds, in classic Larsen fashion, "There are too many normal-looking folks down there, and I'd like to change that—after dealing with all those freaks in *Savage Dragon*, normal-looking folks just don't cut it with me." And there goes that smile again.**

**WIZARD:** It's been hinted that everyone dies in *Savage Dragon* #50. That true?

**LARSEN:** I just tell people stuff to keep them guessing. If I killed everybody off, I wouldn't have anything to draw. The beauty of the book is that there's so much of a cast that I could do a wholesale slaughter and still have plenty left to deal with, and often do. I like people not knowing what's going to happen in *Dragon*. The book can really take U-turns or switchbacks that are so abrupt that you just don't see things coming. It gets to be real tricky writing a story that surprises people. But I want them to be. I want them to not see something coming. When I killed Rapture [Dragon's ex-girlfriend, in issue #43], she wasn't even on the cover that issue.

That was surprising.

Watch out for those left-handed pages, man; they're killers. That's the beauty of being your own boss and knowing where the ads line up. You can plan things out. I write stuff like, every right-sided page could say "to be continued" on the bottom of it, because there's almost always something that's leading you into something else. That's part of the joy of storytelling: keeping people reading ahead, wanting to know what's going to happen.

I also like the idea that this isn't playing games. There are repercussions here. People do get hurt. You are fighting with somebody, that guy's got a shovel in his hand, you might just get it upside the head, and you might not feel too good about it the next morning.

I'm doing this Dragon/Superman crossover, and people keep saying, "Oh, man, I can't wait for that fight!" Why the hell would they fight? In

TOP 10 CONTINUES ON PAGE 72

## VITAL STATS

**OCCUPATION:** Writer/artist/creator of *The Savage Dragon*
**BORN:** December 8, 1967 in Minneapolis, Minn.
**BASE OF OPERATIONS:** Oakland, Calif.
**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:** Rose to prominence following Todd McFarlane's explosive run on Marvel's *Amazing Spider-Man* in 1991; co-founded Image Comics in 1992 to write and draw *The Savage Dragon*, which he continues to do today; is now slated to write DC's *Aquaman* this summer.
**FAVORITE ARTISTIC DODGES:** "You notice that in *The Savage Dragon* nobody ever actually gets into or sees a car? We play with camera angles so that they're avoided completely. And there's not a person alive who possesses any sort of animal–dog, cat or otherwise."

the story, Dragon's going to be a cop and Superman is Superman. He's not going to punch Superman. What is he, insane?

**Dragon meets Superman? That's cool.**

It'll be two one-shots [due out in August]. It will have regular Superman back when Dragon was a cop, and then regular Superman when Dragon's in the SOS [Special Operations Strikeforce]. In the one that I'm doing, Superman comes to Chicago because a bunch of his foes have joined the Vicious Circle [*Dragon*'s supervillain organization], and in [DC's one-shot], Dragon goes to Metropolis. In the first one it's sort of like Dragon's a small-town sheriff and here comes some big guy to help him out, and he feels kind of resentful. And then in the other one, Dragon will be more in the position of [*broadens shoulders à la Dragon*], "Well, they asked for my help; I better go in."

**You pencil, ink, write and edit *Dragon*. Is it noticeably harder than being just the artist or writer?**

For me, the writing is the fastest part. I've never spent more than 24 hours scripting an issue of *Dragon* in my life, or anything else, for that matter. The actual words that come out of people's mouths in the book come quickly to me. I just sit down at the computer and go through the entire book writing whatever the hell comes into my mind, and then I'll go through it a second time, maybe a third, and clean it up, turn it into something more coherent.

I've got scribbled notes that run about three years ahead of where I am almost all the time, but it's fairly loose and there're areas to insert all sorts of different things. I know what happens at the end of #50, and generally speaking, what happens the three or four issues after that.

**So what's up with the over-endowed women? Is that for the 13-year-old boys or is that satire?**

I just plain like to draw big knockers. That's what it comes down to, I guess. It keeps me entertained. When a guy is in a room by himself all day long, he tends to let his imagination go a little wild.

**Have you gotten flack from parents' groups?**

Parents' groups are blissfully unaware of the Dragon's continued existence, and I thank them for their ignorance. Once I did the God-versus-the-Devil issue [*Dragon* #31] where the Devil kneed God in the groin, and I didn't get much flack for it, I pretty much figured I could get away with anything.

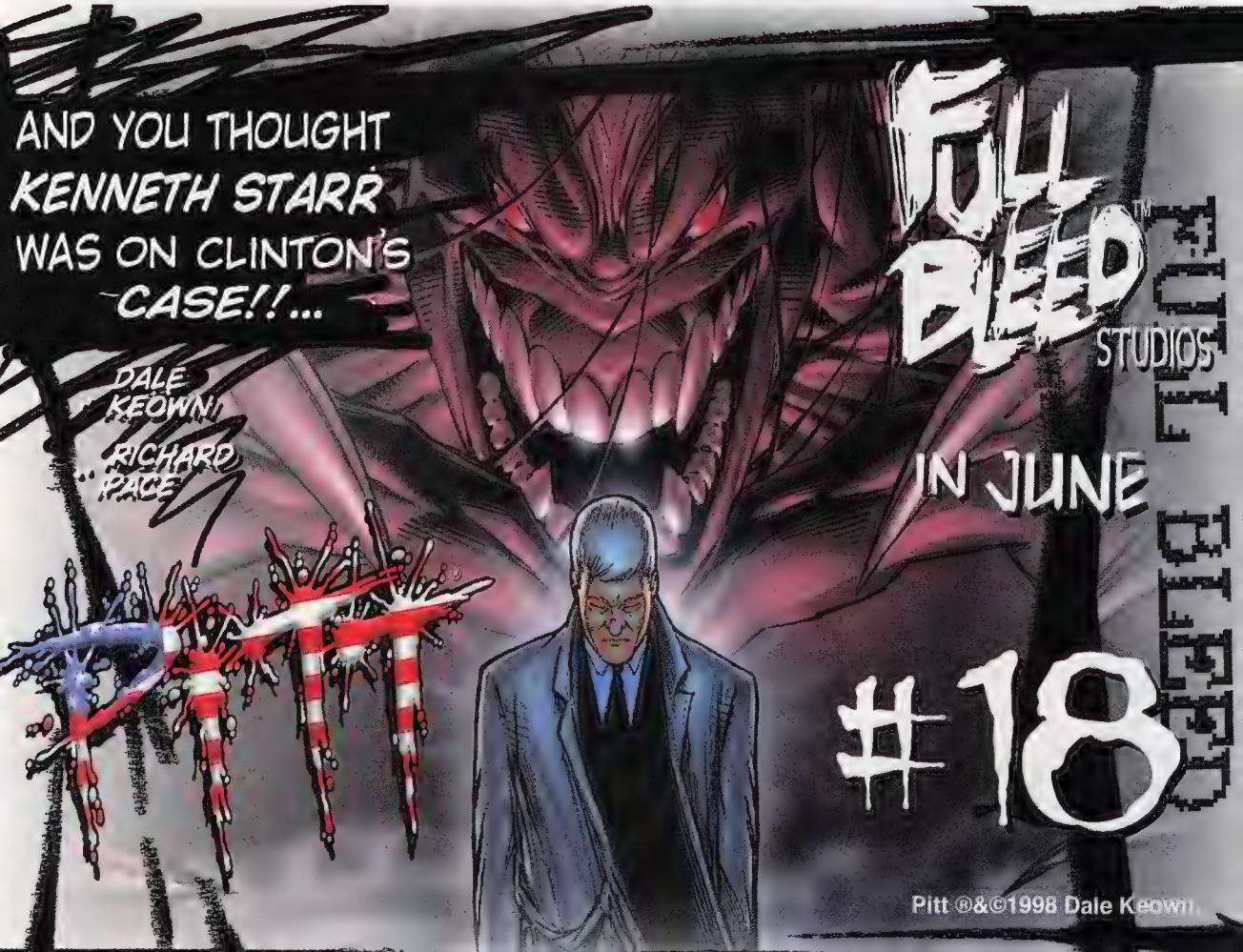
**Is there anything you wouldn't put in the book?**

I'd say full frontal nudity or anal penetration, but give me a couple months [*Laughs*].

**What do you want to work on next? I hear you submitted a proposal for *The Incredible Hulk*, since Peter David is leaving it.**

I didn't get it. They had better get somebody really brilliant on that book, or they'll look like complete idiots. My proposal was like, eight pages long, pretty extensive. I'm an old Hulk fan, so a lot of it was characters I liked when I was a kid that were in the Hulk book.

I knew pretty much when I was writing the proposal that it wasn't

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 70

**6. DADDY DEAREST** In a dream-like sequence, dad-to-be Dragon shows his true feelings on fatherhood. (*Dragon* #28)

quite what they wanted. I think they wanted to do some Vertigo stuff, have him be real dark and scary. It's like, come on, you got enough dark and scary books out there. The main thing I wanted to do was to have Bruce Banner and the Hulk get separated again, except have Bruce Banner be completely whole and functional, and the Hulk to be sort of a superpowered Deadman-type guy, a ghostly Hulk who could inhabit other people and turn them into the Hulk. It seemed like it was taking what Peter had done to kind of a next step. I screw around with that for six months to a year, and then go back to doing dumb-as-a-post Hulk. I thought that would be a nice segue to get him there, rather than have him be dumb right off the bat.

### But *Aquaman* is a go?

It wasn't a book [about which] I was going, "Oh, Peter David left *Aquaman* [which David was also writing]. I've got to get it." I realized at some point I've been playing in my own sandbox for six years, and nobody knows who I am anymore. I should get out and write another book.

The thing is that I just recently got the book, and some of the stuff that is in my proposal will make it into the book, and some won't, and I don't know which is which. I know at this point my first issue, issue #50, is going to be a double-sized book that catches everyone up on the book. I'll establish that Atlantis, which had been floating all over the place, is now set down in one location, and then start dealing with what that location is and what is near it. I've got an entirely new undersea realm that is buried deeper than Atlantis, this group of kind of fluorescent guys, because when you get down real deep, nobody can see. I don't think I have a really good name for their city at this point, just the Hidden City. Down there is a guy named Noble, who is their king, and when Noble discovers that Aquaman's Atlantis is above his city on the edge of a precipice, he's like, "What's going on here?" He didn't know there was anybody else in the ocean. And Noble's people have always been underwater and don't even know there is a surface world.

I really want to introduce a lot more different kinds of folks down there, people from his world, from Noble's world, and mix things up a little bit. When I look at *Aquaman* I go, "You know, everybody in this book is a human being. They look just like human beings, and they're walking around on the floor doing the same stuff you and I would do." How come every building has a door in the bottom and that's it? These people swim. It's almost like you expect somebody to plug in a toaster. This world has so much potential and possibility, and not that much of it has been tapped.

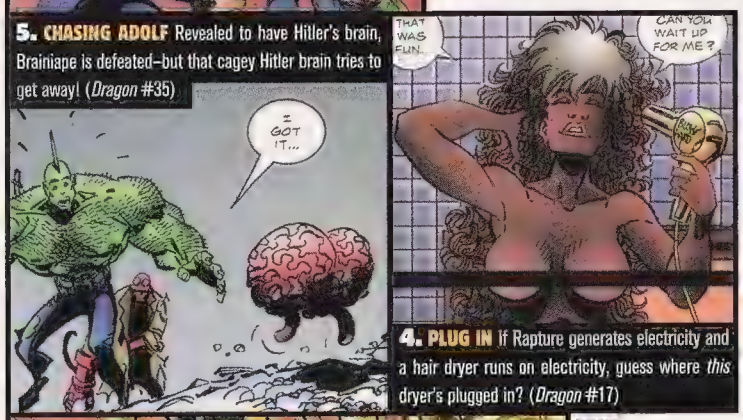
### What about villains?

A hero is measured by his villains, and Aquaman's got Black Manta, Ocean Master and that's it. You're not going to see a recognizable Aquaman villain for the first year. He needs a rogues gallery and he has none. I sort of have Noble in there as the guy who can do stupid things. Aquaman wouldn't be the sort who would want to invade the surface world, but Noble might think that was a good idea. It gives me the contrast, something to play off of.

### Sounds like fun.

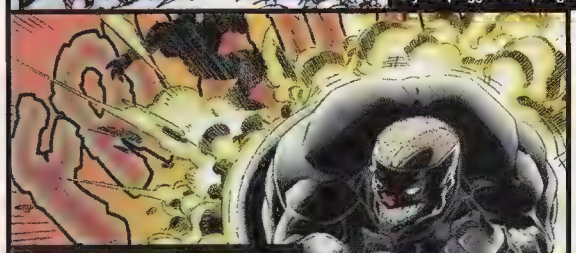
That's what I'm all about, trying to make stuff interesting, dammit. Why aren't you reading *Aquaman*? Why isn't everybody reading *Aquaman*? Maybe it's not everything it could be. Thank God Peter was around, because Peter kept that book going for a long time. He got 46 issues out of it, and that's a good run on a book that hasn't had much of a run before.

Even people who can't stand me and think I'm the Antichrist taking over from Christ—look, if Doctor Doom was following Reed Richards as the new writer on a book, you'd kind of want to find out what Doom was going to do. I think they'll stick around for a few issues just to see how bad I screw things up. For the people who've read it all along, I think they're in for a hell of a ride. And if they haven't read it, they've got something to look forward to.



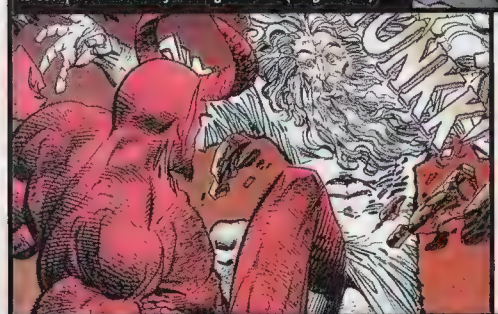

**5. CHASING ADOLF** Revealed to have Hitler's brain, Brainiape is defeated–but that cagey Hitler brain tries to get away! (*Dragon* #35)

**4. PLUG IN** If Rapture generates electricity and a hair dryer runs on electricity, guess where *this* dryer's plugged in? (*Dragon* #17)



**3. BOMBS AWAY!** Backfire displays his devastating, uh, power. (*Dragon* #25)

**2. PAIN IN THE...** Swallowed by a monster, Dragon has to escape the hard way: through its ass. (*Dragon* #35)



**1. HURTS LIKE HELL** When God fights to save Dragon's soul from the depths of Hell, the Devil plays dirty and kicks the Almighty in the crotch. (*Dragon* #31)

*A frequent contributor to* Newsweek, *Adam Rogers is curious to see if Larsen truly can get away with anything.*

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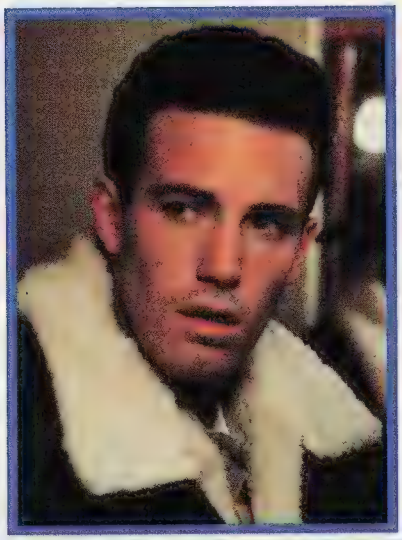
# CASTING call

## WIZARD casts the ALPHA FLIGHT MOVIE!

It'd certainly be a conspiracy if "Alpha Flight: The Movie" wasn't made. It seems that wacky, mysterious organization Department H has revived the once-defunct Canadian superhero team Alpha Flight. And the Department's agenda is as shadowy as the men who run it. These guys are willing to do whatever it takes to achieve their ends—including brainwashing, psychological manipulation, kidnapping and mind control. In short, they play a complicated, unfathomable game of chess, with the poor members of Alpha Flight as their pawns.

So would an Alpha Flight flick kick some serious booty? You bet! This frenzied, paranoid look into superheroism would be "JFK" with mass destruction and spandex, or "Conspiracy Theory" with a midget and a slobbering Sasquatch.

Hopefully, we'll see you in the theater when it comes out. We'll be sitting alone. In the back row. And don't try anything funny—we'll be watching.



**BEN AFFLECK as GUARDIAN**

Strapping young turk Guardian ain't of legal age to drink, but he's nonetheless leading this motley crew. Ben Affleck ("Mallrats," "Good Will Hunting") is exactly the rough-hewn Adonis-type to bring life to this charismatic but troubled hero.

BY A BUNCH OF WIZARD STAFFERS

## DANNY WOODBURN as PUCK

Lord love a midget! The diminutive do-gooder Puck has a little friend in Danny Woodburn, from UPN's "Conan." Shave down Woodburn's hair and *voilà!*—instant Puck.

## THE WAMPA as SASQUATCH

If mountains were hairy and drooled a lot, they'd be Alpha Flight's Sasquatch. To play this behemoth, we went straight to Hoth and enlisted the Wampa from "The Empire Strikes Back." And paid it in Tauntaun innards.

## GILLIAN ANDERSON as VINDICATOR

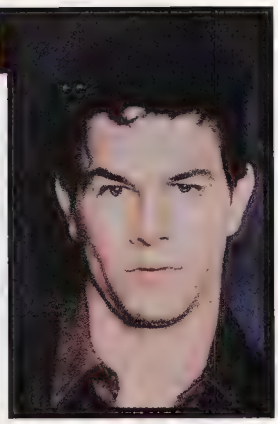
The truth is out there—Gillian Anderson ("The X-Files") is the queen of spunkiness. Her grit and determination as Agent Scully would transfer perfectly to the role of Guardian's wife Vindicator.

## YASMEEN GHAURI as MURMUR

With just a touch and a word, Murmur can make others do her bidding. Put some spandex on lingerie model Yasmeen Ghauri and there's no one we'd rather be enslaved by.

## MARK WAHLBERG as RADIUS

Obnoxious super-punk Radius grates on the masses like fingernails on a chalkboard. How perfect is shirtless nuisance "Marky" Mark Wahlberg ("Boogie Nights") to play the part?



## EDWARD NORTON as FLEX

Quiet and unassuming, Edward Norton's the ideal sort to portray Radius' younger brother Flex. Check out his role as a mousy lawyer in "The People vs. Larry Flynt" to see Norton at his understated best.

## DUSTIN NGUYEN as SUNFIRE

We rolled the dice and they came up Dustin Nguyen ("21 Jump Street") as the Japanese mutant Sunfire. And the dice don't lie, folks.

## PETE POSTLETHWAITE as GENERAL CLARKE

The stinky, slimy, scheming slug Clarke is dirty like New Jersey sludge. As a dinosaur hunter in "The Lost World," Pete Postlethwaite demonstrated a decidedly rotten side.
He's got the job.

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Featuring Three Great Creative Teams:

James Robinson - Jim Lee - Scott Williams

Alan Moore - Travis Charest - JD

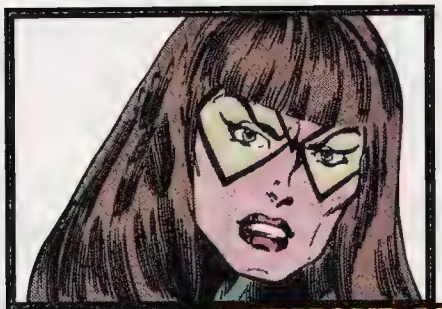
Brandon Choi - Jonathan Peterson – Ed Benes - Al Vey

no. 50

It's Just A Beginning...

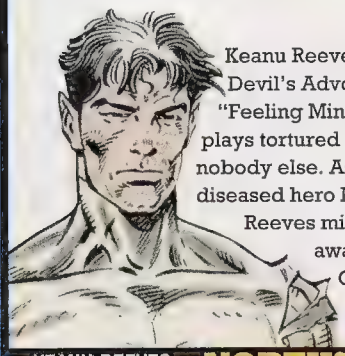
## DYLAN McDERMOTT as SCORPIO

With a stare that can melt steel, Dylan McDermott ("The Practice") pays his bills with intensity. He's our evil mastermind Scorpio.



## MARISKA HARGITAY as DIAMOND LIL

If we didn't cast Mariska Hargitay ("ER") as the super-tough heroine Diamond Lil, she'd probably come to our office and beat us up.



Keanu Reeves ("The Devil's Advocate," "Feeling Minnesota") plays tortured souls like nobody else. As the angry, diseased hero Northstar, Reeves might walk away with an Oscar for his efforts.

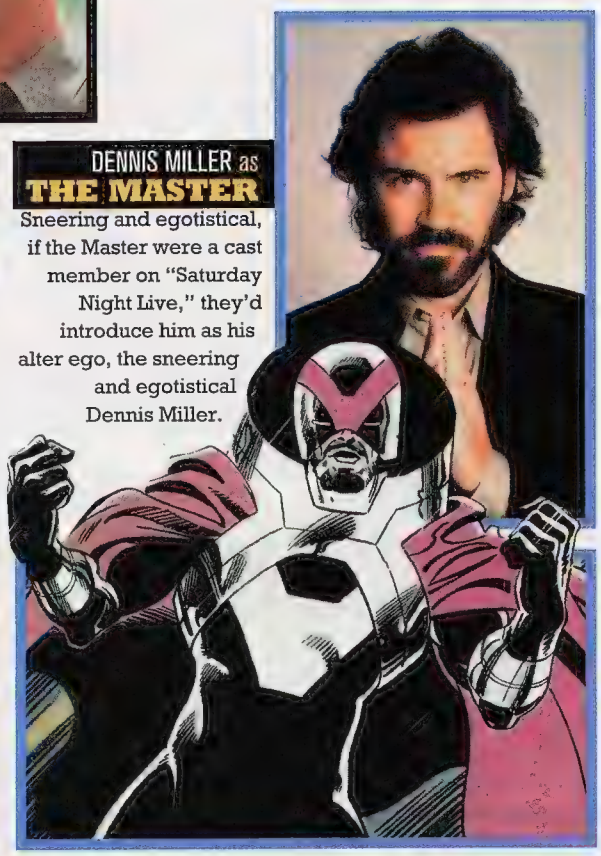
## KEANU REEVES as NORTHSTAR

## KELSEY GRAMMER as MESMERO

Imagine "Frasier" star Kelsey Grammer's insane laugh and then get out the green paint—we've just created the vile and twisted Mesmero.

## DENNIS MILLER as THE MASTER

Sneering and egotistical, if the Master were a cast member on "Saturday Night Live," they'd introduce him as his alter ego, the sneering and egotistical Dennis Miller.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF FOTO FANTASIES: AFFLECK ' JOHN P. JOHNSON, WOODBURN ' 1997 WIS, POSTLETHWAITE " & ' 1997 UNIVERSAL CITY STUDIOS & AMBLIN, REEVES ' MURRAY CLOSE; FROM OUTLINE: ANDERSON ' GREG LAVY, GHAURI ' STEVE SAKOS, WAHLBERG ' MIKE RUIZ, NORTON ' ALEX BERLINER, NGUYEN ' CARLO DALLA CHIESA, McDERMOTT ' DAVIS FACTOR, HARGITAY ' LAURA LUONGO, GRAMMER ' EDIE BASKIN; WAMPA IN THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK " & ' 1997 LUCASFILM LTD., THE TOPPS COMPANY, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED; MILLER COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION.

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Followers of Dave Finch and Batt's megahit comic are not gonna want to miss the *Ascension* #1/2, brought to you by *Wizard* and Top Cow, as it reveals all the details of Voivodul's nefarious plan! So gather up that check book and mail in that $3 immediately. The fate of two worlds depends on it!

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- The revelation of Voivodul's master plan!
- Behind-the-scenes sketchbook material! See the steps involved in making this unbelievable #1/2 issue a reality!
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# COMING attracti

## THE NEW BATMAN

### Teenage Batman takes over in lighter, futuristic cartoon

## BATMEN

TODAY vs. TOMORROW

A comparison of the current animated Batman and the Batman of "Tomorrow"

| | BRUCE WAYNE | TERRY McGAVIN |
|---|---|---|
| AGE | Mid-30s | 17 |
| FINANCIAL STATUS | Filthy rich | Filthy...uh middle class |
| MOTIVATION | Murdered parents | Murdered father |
| ATTITUDE | Grim, with a hint of lightheartedness | Determined, but with a lighter sense of humor |
| GOTHAM CITY | Scummy, dirty, crime-infested | Futuristic, still crime-infested, multi-cultural |
| POLICE PAL | Commissioner Jim Gordon | Commissioner Barbara Gordon |
| ASSISTANT | Alfred, an old butler | Bruce Wayne, an old fart |

Bruce Wayne's an old man. No longer physically capable of fighting crime, he hasn't been **Batman** for years. Instead, he broods in his ghostly mansion on the edge of town, alone, except for Ace, his Great Dane. He doesn't read the paper, doesn't watch television. He leaves the bad guys to the city's high-tech police force.

Terry McGavin's a 17-year-old high school senior. He's got your average teenage problems: girls, school, a younger brother. But then his father's killed and everything changes. While seeking vengeance for his father's death, McGavin stumbles upon the secret that Wayne was once the Dark Knight. And, in an uneasy alliance with Wayne, McGavin dons a high-tech costume, changing both their lives as Batman is reborn.

Welcome to the future of Gotham City.

That future is **"Batman Tomorrow,"** an all-new animated series headed for Saturdays at 9 a.m. on Kids' WB! next fall. Alan Burnett, Paul Dini and Bruce Timm—the same producers behind the current "Batman" and **"Superman"** animated series—are adding this third show to their plate, with 13 episodes of "Tomorrow" planned for the first season. While they're still ironing out a number of details for this series targeted at a younger audience, here's what they've got cooking so far:

HOLLYWOOD AND TV STUFF THAT YOU CARE ABOUT

# ONS

## GETTING INTO CHARACTER

**BAT GEEZER** Bruce's "still got the moves," says Timm (above)—but not enough to be Batman.

Relationships have always been a sore spot for Batman, and that trend continues into "Tomorrow." The producers liken the Wayne/McGavin dynamic to the old samurai handing his sword over to the young warrior—only with a lot of sparks.

"They don't really get along," Timm said. "They kind of have a co-dependent relationship. The kid needs Bruce Wayne because Bruce Wayne's got all the crime-fighting gear. Bruce Wayne needs the kid because he can't be Batman any more and the kid *can*.

"I really love the old Bruce Wayne character; he's fascinating," Timm continued. "He's like 80 years old, pissed off all the time, yet he's still got the moves. If the kid ever talks back to him, Bruce can have him down on the ground with a cane at his throat in about two seconds. But he can't keep it going enough to be Batman."

The Batman of "Tomorrow" will be more lighthearted than most fans are used to. And that's to be expected considering the younger target audience. But it doesn't mean there'll be no dark in this Dark Knight.

"He's not quite as grim as Bruce Wayne was, but he's certainly not going to be **Spider-Man** either," Timm said of McGavin. "He won't be a happy-go-lucky superhero, but he will have a little bit of that feel to him. He's not going to be quite as closed-mouth, short-sentenced, beat-the-crap-out-of-the-villains type of guy [like the current Batman]. I don't want to say he's going to quip all the time, but he will have more of a sense of humor."

As for other familiar characters? Well, there's some bad news in that department. Both **Alfred** and Commissioner Jim Gordon are dead, although according to Burnett, Commissioner Gordon lives on—former Batgirl Barbara Gordon follows her father as Gotham City's commissioner. The status of Dick Grayson (Nightwing) and Tim Drake (Robin) is being left open.

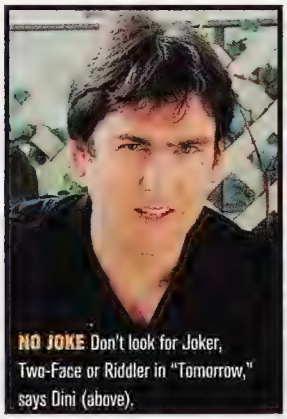
## THE FUTURE OF GOTHAM CITY

"It's a little 'Blade Runner'-like, although not nearly as depressing," Timm said of the status of Gotham City. "It's more of a high-tech city, more futuristic than even Metropolis is at the moment. Again, bigger scale. If our buildings were 200-stories-tall before, they're probably double that now."

Burnett assured, however, that the show won't become a big, futuristic sci-fi series. The emphasis is still on characters and their personalities. And along with Gotham's more futuristic look comes a new assortment of citizens.

"The city also has a lot of multi-cultural touches," Dini added. "That's indicated by the number of signs which will be printed in different languages. It reflects that Gotham has really opened up as far as people from all over the world go."

## THE VILLAINS



**NO JOKE** Don't look for Joker, Two-Face or Riddler in "Tomorrow," says Dini (above).

The **Joker**? Nope. Riddler? Uh-uh. Two-Face? Not a chance. While the creative team is tight-lipped, don't expect to see futuristic versions of your favorite Bat-foes.

"We're trying to get as far away from the old villains as we can," Dini said. "There are a couple of lingering touches like a street gang that looks like a bunch of violent clowns called The Jokers. The other villains are all new and don't harken back in any way to the original rogues gallery. Those guys are all dead and forgotten."

So who should viewers look for? Well, there's Derek Powers, chairman of Powers Industries, which has consolidated with Wayne Enterprises while Wayne neglected his company. Also, watch for a new version of the playing-card-themed Royal Flush Gang. As for the rest of the villains, you'll definitely notice one strong similarity to all your old favorites.

"Batman villains usually come out of a damaged psyche," Dini summed up. "We're looking for ways to take people with strange quirks and compulsive behavior, and take them one step further into a supervillain identity." ■ **ROB ALLSTETTER**

## WINNERS & LOSERS

WHO SCORED ... WHO BORED

**WINNERS OF THE MONTH:** Bruce Timm, Paul Dini and Alan Burnett. The red-hot animation team of Timm, Dini and Burnett have already scored big with "Batman" and "Superman" cartoons. Now they get their third Kids' WB! cartoon with the futuristic "Batman Tomorrow" debuting this fall. And there are rumors the team has been approached about a Marvel-based Avengers show.

**LOSER OF THE MONTH:** Rharrgh, Marvel film division! Hulk hear making of "Hulk" film stopped because too expensive to make! That make Hulk and Johnny Depp mad! And Betty tell Hulk there no money to make puny "Daredevil" or "Venom" movies. Why Hulk not see stupid "Spider-Man" movie yet? Hulk just want to SMASH! ■ **THE *WIZARD* STAFF**

TIMM PHOTO: © 1997 WARNER BROS. DINI PHOTO: COURTESY OF PAUL DINI.

# GODZILLA MANIA

## Giant lizard launches monstrous licensing blitz

"Godzilla" hasn't even landed yet and the big guy's already marking his scent in the United States.

Everyone's favorite classic monster-sized lizard Godzilla will stomp his way into theaters on May 20 with a roar compliments of Columbia TriStar. Starring **Matthew Broderick**, the movie will actually feature more monster than man. Just don't expect a cheesy flick with some guy in a rubber suit. "Godzilla" movie creators **Dean Devlin** and **Roland Emmerich** ("StarGate," "ID4") have altered the lizard into one giant, computer-generated special effect. And we mean giant. "A T-Rex would basically come up to the ankle of Godzilla," Devlin said.

**AAAAHHH!** Godzilla hits theaters (and steps on people) May 20.

"He's that big," Emmerich added. "He makes a footstep and it's 140 feet. So when he runs, he can run up to 300-380 miles an hour down the street."

As big as "Godzilla" is, everyone involved is keeping details quiet. Godzilla's still born from a radioactive base, and he'll be terrorizing New York City, not Tokyo. Beyond that, not much else has leaked out—particularly pictures. Recent movie trailers have only shown the giant lizard's eye, foot and tail. Yet a number of companies are banking on "Godzilla" being this summer's sure-fire blockbuster before moviegoers have even *seen* the monster.

Like its predecessors—"Jurassic Park," "Independence Day" and "Men in Black"—this monster film won't be limited to just theaters. Godzilla will attack the United States through a fall animated series, a toy line tied to the movie's release and a mass-marketing campaign including promotional goodies from Taco Bell, Kentucky Fried Chicken and even Dryer's ice cream. The animated series (still in negotiations regarding networks) will remain as true to the original '50s version of Godzilla as possible. With some 41 items, Trendmasters' toy line promises to be the largest initial toy release ever for a motion picture. Meanwhile, Taco Bell and KFC will have in-store kids' items, while Dryers'll introduce its newest flavor: Godzilla Vanilla. Godzilla mania is on the way, and you can clearly taste it. ■ **MATTHEW SENREICH**

# FASTFORWARD

THIS MONTH: TV ANIMATION

| PROJECT | TIME SLOT | NETWORK | RATING/SHARE* | INSIDE SCOOP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NEW BATMAN/ SUPERMAN ADVENTURES | Weekdays, 4 p.m. Saturdays, 9:30-10:30 a.m. "Superman" Saturdays, 8:30 a.m. | Kids' WB! | 2.2/7 (Saturday's hour block) | "Superman" ratings improved some 40 percent from its first season. Look for team-ups between Superman-Batman, Superman-Robin and Batgirl-Supergirl. |
| INCREDIBLE HULK | Sundays, 10 a.m. | UPN | 1.3/5 | No new episodes are planned for next fall's "The Incredible Hulk & Friends," which will also feature reruns of "Iron Man" and "Fantastic Four." |
| KING OF THE HILL | Sundays, 8:30 p.m. | Fox | 9.2/14 | This show's the breakout hit of past two seasons and a perfect fit between "The Simpsons" and "The X-Files." It's been renewed for two more seasons. |
| MEN IN BLACK | Saturdays, 9 a.m. Fridays, 4:30 p.m. | Kids' WB! | 1.8/6 (Saturday) | Moves to 9:30 a.m. for second season. |
| SILVER SURFER | Saturdays, 11:30 a.m. | Fox | 2.8/9 | Fans ain't surf bored. "Surfer" is successfully filling the former "X-Men" time spot. |
| THE SIMPSONS | Sundays, 8 p.m. | Fox | 9.2/14 | "The Simpsons" remains Fox's flagship series of the 1990s, although voice performers are demanding a substantial pay increase. D'oh. |
| SOUTH PARK | Wednesdays, 10:00 p.m. | Comedy Central | Not Available (N/A) | This show is setting network records with every new episode. Creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone have begun refusing interviews. We smell a Mr. Hankey... |
| SPAWN | Fridays at midnight for six weeks beginning May 16. | HBO | N/A | "Spawn" season two will play out the Jason Wynn arc. Will it have another Wynn-ing year? |
| SPIDER-MAN | Monday-Thursday, 3:30 p.m. | Fox | 2.9/10 | Spidey moves to UPN, Sundays at 10:30 a.m., beginning next fall. No new episodes are planned. |
| X-MEN | Various | No longer on Fox, airing in syndication. | 2.8/9 | Marvel's mutants move to UPN, Sundays at 10 a.m., beginning next fall. No new episodes are planned. |

*Each rating point represents 980,000 households. A share is the percentage of the nation's active TV homes.*

GODZILLA PHOTO: CENTROPOLIS EFFECTS COLUMBIA/TRISTAR

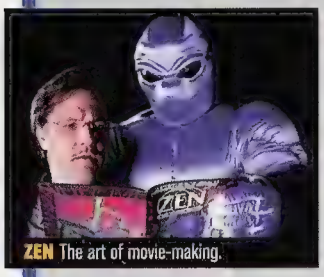
# TRAILERS...

LIGHTS... CAMERA... ACTION?

**CAP RE-CAPPED?:** "Captain America," Marvel's newest weekly animated series set for a September start on Fox, has been delayed until at least February according to sources, amid continuing rumors that the show might be canceled. A representative of Saban said "Captain America" remains in development, but a source said there have been "discussions regarding the creative direction of the series and concerns over some early creative choices." Specifically, those "choices" include the decision to set the series during World War II.

**TOMB TO FILM:** Paramount Pictures has acquired the film rights to Eidos Interactive's *Tomb Raider* action/adventure video game. Lawrence Gordon ("Die Hard," "Boogie Nights") and Lloyd Levin ("Event Horizon," "Boogie Nights") will produce a live-action movie centering around Lara Croft, the game's computer-generated star.

**OWN SPAWN:** The "Spawn" live-action movie will be released by New Line Home Video on May 5. There's the PG-13 version ($14.98) and the R-rated "director's cut" version ($19.98) featuring an interview with Spawn creator Todd McFarlane, a making of "Spawn" featurette and a Crystal Method/Filter music video.

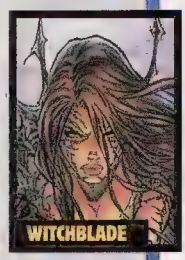


**ZEN** The art of movie-making.

**ZEN ACTING:** Filming is scheduled to begin this summer in Montreal on "Zen Intergalactic Ninja," a live-action movie based on the comics character created by Steve Stern and Dan Cote in 1987. Brian Yuzna ("Re-Animator") will direct for Canada's Cinegroupe, which is also producing the animated "Heavy Metal: F.A.K.K.2."

**MICROVISION:** The Micronauts are coming to the small screen. Abrams-Gentile Entertainment is producing a syndicated animated television series based on the mini toy/comic characters. A five-part mini-series will air this fall, with the remainder of the 22 half-hour episodes planned for early 1999.

**RUMOR MILL:** Mark Waid has been in discussions with Marvel/Fox/Saban about possible Marvel animated series....A "Weapon Zero" telefilm could wind up on a cable network. The budget would likely be in the $4 million range, and writer Jonathan Gems ("Mars Attacks!") has been linked to the project....Angela could play a big role in the "Spawn" sequel.

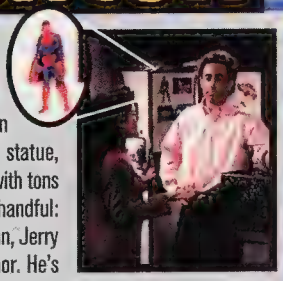

**WITCHBLADE**

**SHORT TAKES:** At press time, Oliver Stone's Illusion Entertainment was ironing out an agreement with TNT for the "Witchblade" television series. The series could begin as early as January....Top Cow's "SubCulture" is now in development at Mainframe Entertainment, the producer of "Reboot."...."South Park" creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone will join Yasmine Bleeth and Jenny McCarthy in the upcoming motion picture comedy "BASEketball."...NBC's "Wonder Woman" television pilot movie remains on the launching pad, although no script or cast has been finalized. If it becomes a series, it's unlikely it'll be ready for the fall...Universal Pictures' "Hulk" film has been halted primarily because of budgetary concerns. The movie remains alive at the studio, with the script being reworked to bring down costs....."Men in Black" won the Academy Award for Best Makeup at the late-March presentation event, making it the only film to beat the awards-sweeping "Titanic" in a non-actor category. ■ **RA**

**MEN IN BLACK** Takes the gold.

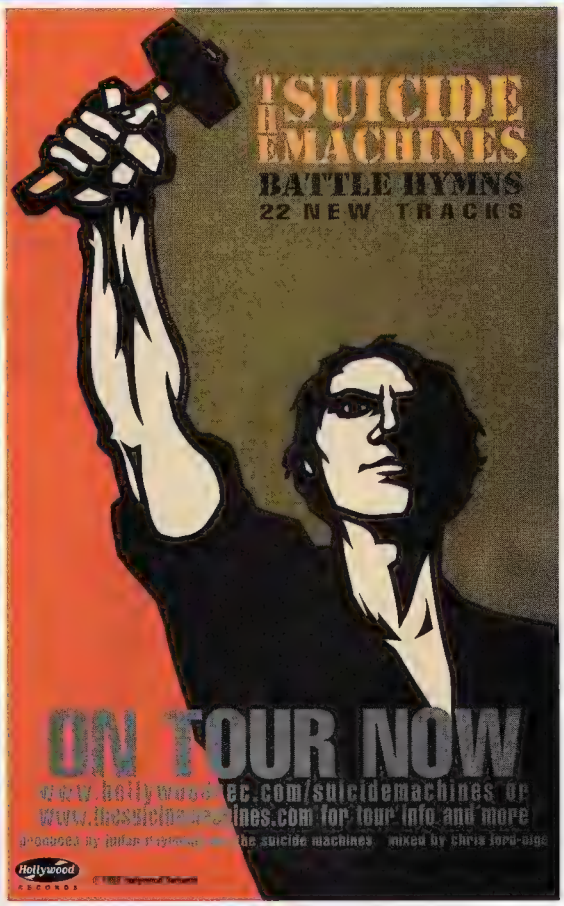
# SUPERSITCOM

'SEINFELD' ENDS LONG RUN OF SUPERMAN JOKES



As NBC's hit comedy "Seinfeld" ends its run May 14, it cuts a connection with the comic book world. Besides the Superman fridge magnet (shown right) and statue, Jerry Seinfeld filled eight seasons with tons of Superman references. Here's a handful:

- On his neighbor-nuisance Newman, Jerry says, "Superman had his Lex Luthor. He's mine." ("The Suicide," first aired Jan. 29, 1992)
- When a reporter named Sharon claims she had a thing for him, Jerry says, "I was attracted to you, too. You remind me of Lois Lane." ("The Outing," Feb. 11, 1993)
- Jerry explains to George why he must sell his odor-flooded car: "Even Superman would be helpless against this kind of stench." ("The Smelly Car," Apr. 15, 1993)
- Elaine finds herself in a Bizarro-Seinfeld world with three dull opposites of her pals Jerry, George and Kramer. At the episode's end, one Bizarro-bud tells the others, "Me so happy." ("The Bizarro Jerry," Oct. 3, 1996)
- Even outside "Seinfeld," the star's fandom shows: American Express' recent TV commercial starring Seinfeld and an animated Superman (voiced by Patrick Warburton, Elaine's sometime boyfriend David Puddy) has Jerry show the Cashless Son of Krypton the power of an AmEx card by helping Lois make a purchase. ■ **MARC WILKOFSKY**



ZEN: RIX VAN GLINTENKAMP; MEN IN BLACK: MELANIE SUE GORDON; SEINFELD: COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION.

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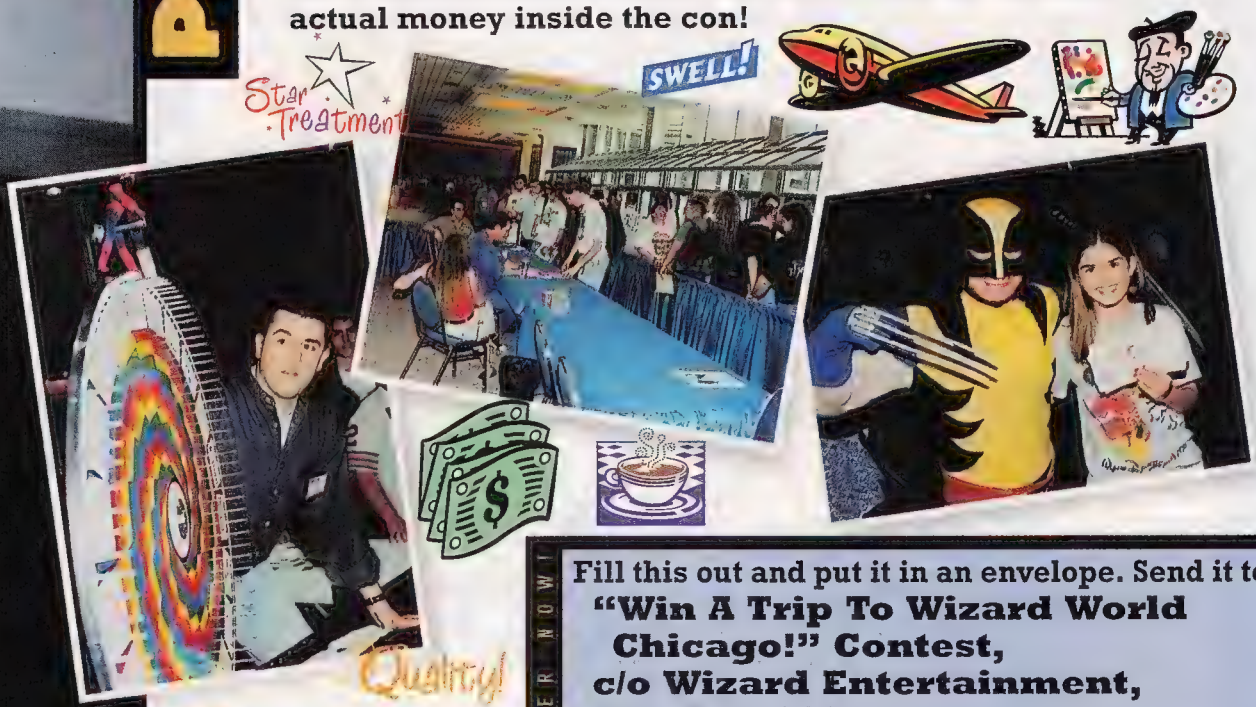


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**THIS CONTEST IS SPONSORED BY WIZARD ENTERTAINMENT SINCE WE ARE THE COOLEST!**

## THE CON-TEXT

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone 18 years and older. Sorry, no employees of Wizard Entertainment or their immediate families are eligible to win. Neither is anyone who'd use the $200 Wizbucks to buy Valiant back issues. You got problems, buddy. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, E-mail address and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "Win A Trip To Wizard World Chicago!" Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Just wait till you get your first bite of a convention hot-dog. Ever see that episode of "The Simpsons" where Lisa drinks the water in the "It's a Small World"-type boat ride? They have that kinda effect on you. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by June 15, 1998.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Winners will be selected based on random entry by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be notified no later than July 3, 1998. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about June 26, 1998.

For a list of winners, available after June 26, 1998, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "Win A Trip To Wizard World Chicago!" Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

## "Win a Trip To Wizard World Chicago!" Contest Entry Form

**CONTEST DEADLINE JUNE 15, 1998!**

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

E-mail _____

# BASIC TRAINING

## LIAM SHARP SHOWS YOU

THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL INSTRUCTOR

# HOW TO BULK UP

Do you believe that to be truly great, there can be no substitute for reality? Well, if your answer's yes, then don't read this column! Confused? Don't be. What I'll be demonstrating here is how to take your figures to the extreme. We're talking muscles that make the giant redwoods look like bonsai pansies. Veins that make your body look like road maps. Now, I'm going to assume you know your basic figure drawing, and therefore, I'll be concentrating mostly on the arms and torso.

So lock your bedroom door, employ your most manic expression, stick on the loudest, darkest, meanest track of music in your possession and wait for the banging and shouting to start...RIGHT!

Let's pump up our hero!

Fig. 1a

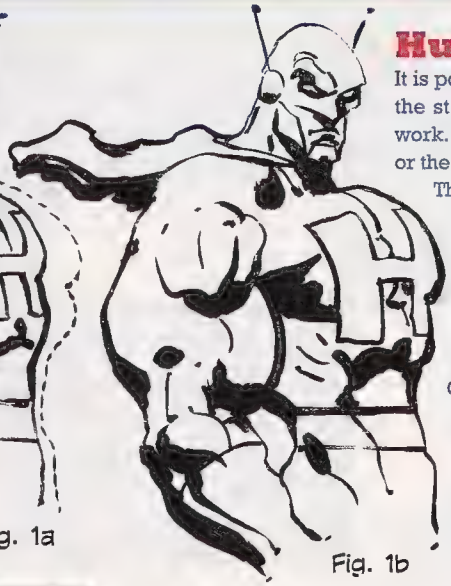


Fig. 1b

## Hulking Out

It is possible to actually double the width of the standard hero figure and still make it work. This requires massive steroid abuse or the ballooning of specific muscle groups. The dotted line in figure 1a shows how certain areas are ballooned to a much greater degree than others. Joints such as the knees, wrists and elbows will remain pretty much the same. I like to keep the waistline narrow (just as painters Richard Corben and Simon Bisley do), to enhance the muscles that are enlarged. In reality, this would put an enormous amount of stress on the lower back and spinal column, but it looks great!

## Widening the Gap

To be truly heroically proportioned, you need to get that permanent "footballs under the arm" look. Lats are the muscles that give you the classic "V." They're the muscles that really make your chest start widening. If we're going to push it to the limit, we've got to increase the "V" angle from 45 degrees to 90 degrees (see figure 2b), which basically means increasing the size of the lats.

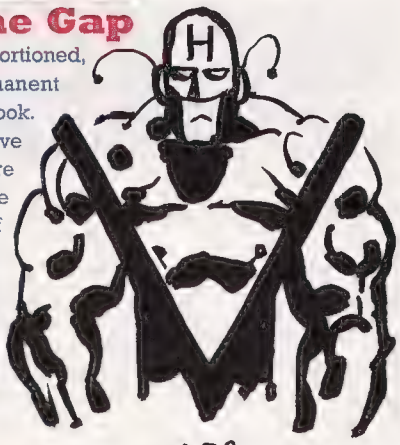



Fig. 2a

Fig. 2b

Tension points of shoulder & chest

Muscles on the side of the figure not delivering mayhem are stretched, less detailed and have less deep shadows.

Note uneven spacing of abdominal muscles.

ABS AND PECS SHOW MORE DETAIL, DEEPER SHADOWS AND STRIATIONS ON TENSE SIDE OF FIGURE.

PUNCH TEST DUMMY

Fig. 3

## Getting Ripped Off

Now that we've pushed the size of our figure, the next objective is to get seriously ripped. That means muscle definition. If a figure is punching another figure, maybe only one of the puncher's pectoral muscles will be tense. Biceps and triceps are rarely evenly tensed at the same time. Stomach muscles are rarely evenly spaced. If we can learn from and apply these basic understandings of anatomy to our monstrously muscled invention, we'll be making big steps. Remember, this is not reality, but the definition you apply to your drawing is what tells you the figure's size is made up of *muscle*, not fat.

TRAPS

DELTOICS

PECS

TRICEPS

BICEPS

LATS

ABS

OBLIQUES

Muscle definition comes from the visible striations of the muscle fibres under the skin.

Try and get acquainted with how each major muscle group interrelates with the rest.

Fig. 4

**Definition lends the figure tension and is the only thing that can make a hugely muscled character dynamic. So while this is not reality, a good working knowledge of musculature is important in pulling off a character like this. (By the way, the striations I refer to in the figure are just lines and bands, which are usually parallel.)**

Note how the deepest shadows form under the largest muscle masses.

Small veins branch into chest and abdomen, represented by single lines breaking the striation lines

Main vein running down bicep (note heavy line on one side giving form)

typical striation lines showing muscle definition

smaller veins represented by single lines

long vein curling round outside of arm

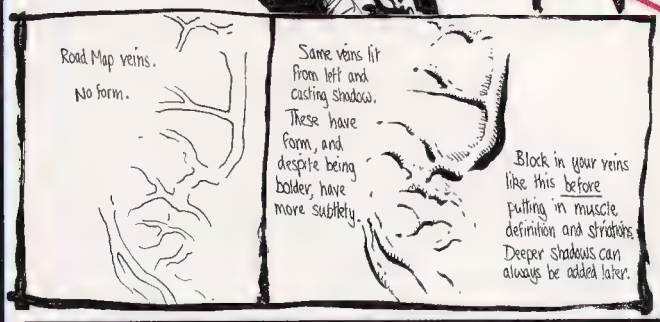
more veins on side of arm facing in towards the body

Fig. 5

## Trying in Vein

To be honest, I have no idea how veins work in the forearm! What I do know is the side of the arm facing the body is the most veiny, and having one or two long veins curl around from the elbow over the outside of the arm to the wrist *always* looks cool. Over the biceps there is usually one hose-pipe of a vein that other smaller veins branch out of, and this is usually criss-crossed at the shoulder with other veins that may even cross over to the chest. In a truly ripped figure, there are veins everywhere.

Once I've drawn the basic figure, I bang in the veins almost at random, but still apply the loose rules outlined above. DON'T draw both sides of the vein—one side of a raised surface is in shadow, the other picked out by light. (Although when a vein is coming down vertically you should *suggest*, rather than state, both sides by making one side a heavier line.) When veins are drawn like road maps, it looks like they're on the outside of the figure, not under the skin.




## Veins, Strains and Automobiles

Veins will always be more visible when the hero is straining his muscles. A relaxed arm will be less veiny than a tense one. Once I start inking my work, I first put in the veins, and then I actually draw the muscles *underneath* what I've put down. This saves money on white-out and keeps the drawing cleaner. The amount of definition I put into each muscle depends on what the character is doing. If he is driving a car, there will obviously be less definition than if he is picking one up.

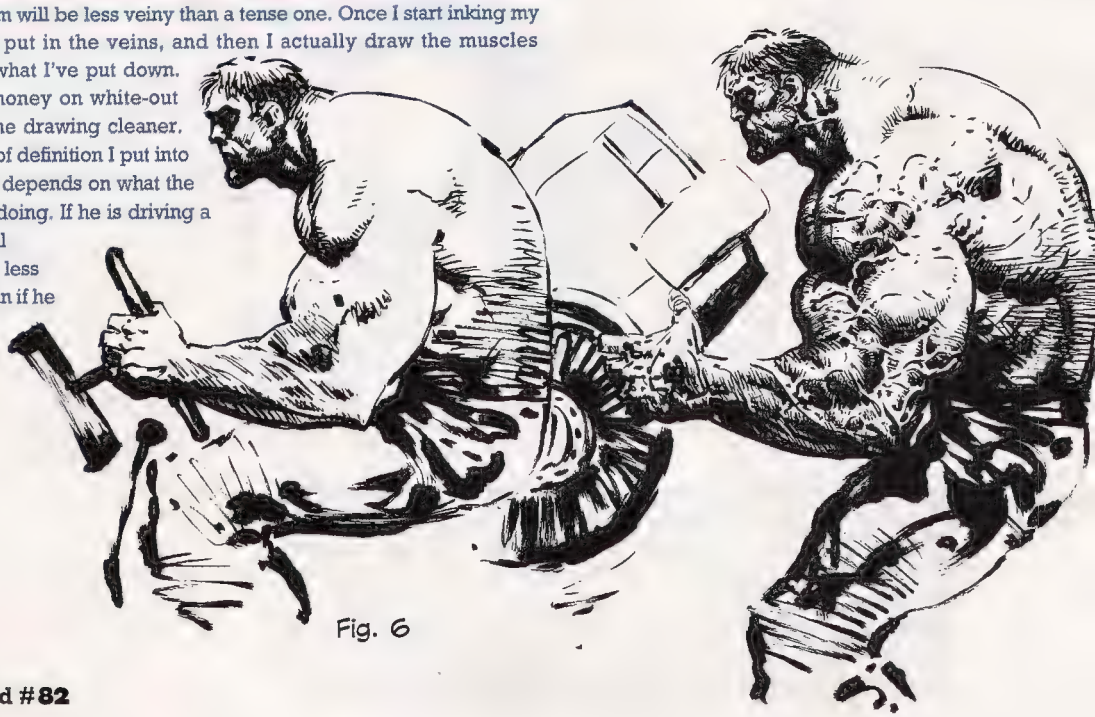


Fig. 6

## Big Girls

How does all this apply to bulking up the female form? Well, all the previous things I've said stay pretty much the same in a woman. You take your basic female figure and push it outwards, retaining a slim waist, knees, elbows, etc., as I've shown in figure 7. One thing worth holding back on, though, is the abdominal detail and bulk to the traps (see figure 4 for where these are) and neck area. Bulking these up tends to make the characters look too masculine, and on the whole this isn't what editors and most readers want.

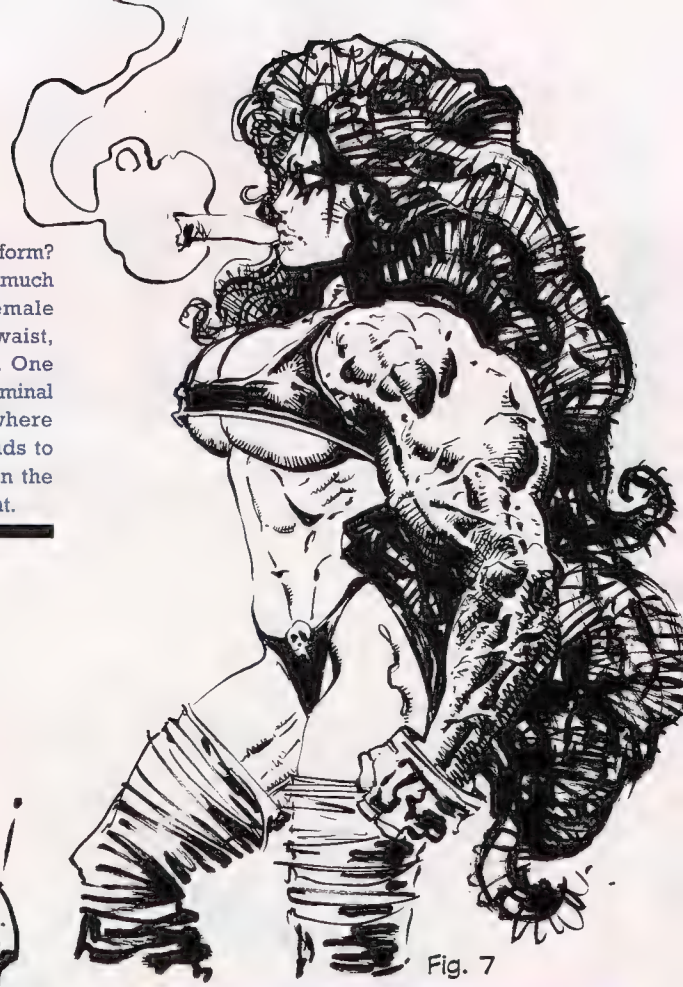


Fig. 7

Finally, here's our hero pumped up, striated and veined. A last little tip is to avoid detail of this intensity on areas that are lighter in color, i.e. the belt and gloves in this instance.

Fig. 8

**And that's about it. Just remember, everyone has their own style. As an artist, I have been inspired by many different techniques and approaches. The human form may be defined in a thousand different ways. Try making heads smaller than you normally do. Try narrowing the waistline, lengthening the legs and taking the hands halfway down the thighs of a standing figure. Just play, and most importantly, try to enjoy it! When and *if* it is your turn to do a *Watchmen* or *Dark Knight* (or even a *Lobo*), you must be ready, calm and at the height of your artistic prowess. So take your time. Learn all you can. But most of all, have fun!**

*Liam Sharp's bulked-up and veiny characters can be seen monthly in the pages of Marvel Comics'* Man-Thing. *His first name spelled backwards is* "Mail."

good luck and cheers!

THE READERS SHOW THEIR CHOPS

# Drawing BOARD

**Who needs the pros? This is the show for WIZARD READERS' ART**

Hulk smashed puny human, and *Incredible Hulk* artist, Adam Kubert into giving this month's Grand Prize winner one original sketch of the winner's new interpretation of a Marvel character caught in a gamma bomb explosion. (That's what we asked for—and promised—in *Wizard* #76's Hulk contest.) This talented winner also received a cool Hulk vs. Thing T-shirt, a Hulk retailer stand-up, a Hulk Pez dispenser and a copy of *Hulk: Future Imperfect* #1 signed by Peter David and George Pérez. Each of our honorable mentions got the Hulk stand-up, the Pez dispenser and the same nifty autographed comic. And each and every one of 'em gets their art shown here. Congratulations, all! We love ya!

## GRAND PRIZE WINNER

THIS ONE CAUGHT OUR EYE

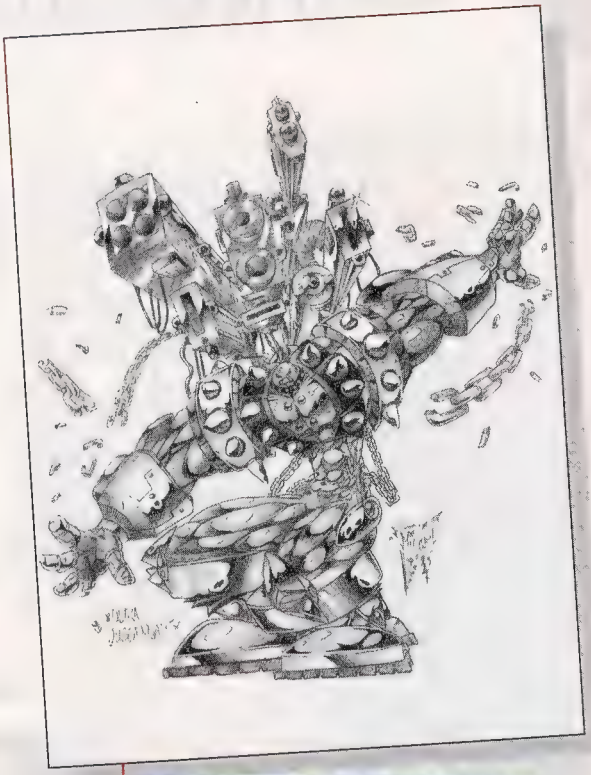
**OMEGA GREEN** by
**SHAUN MARTENS**
**Alberta, Canada**

## THE BOOTY

**A HULK-A, HULK-A BURNIN' LOVE**
DAVID CRAIG, Pawtucket, R.I.

**RHINO-HULK**
SEAN KARN, Lakewood, Ohio

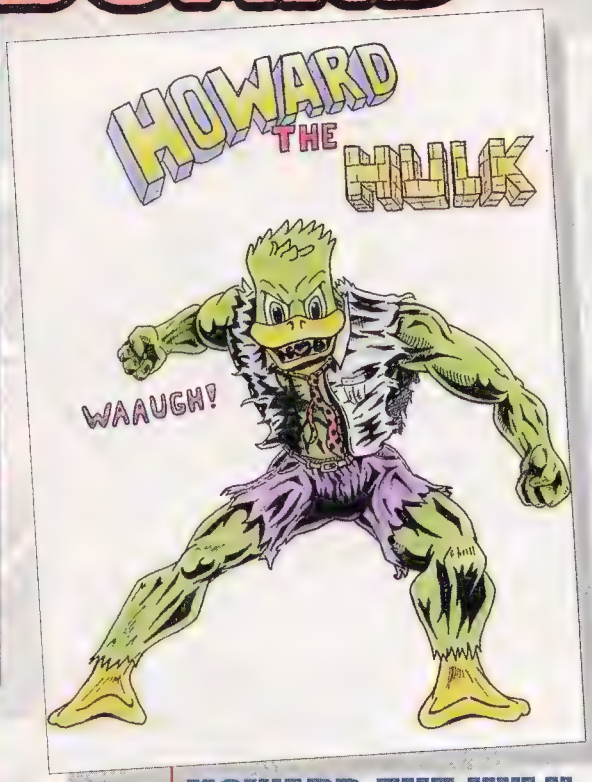
**ARACHULK**
JONATHAN BUNTING, San Jose, Calif.



**ULTRA-JUGGERNAUT**
MIGUEL ANGEL LOPEZ, JR., El Paso, Texas

HONORABLE MENTIONS

# Drawing Board




**HOWARD THE HULK**
**ERICK SUGIMURA, Mammoth Lakes, Calif.**

**PROJECT GAMMA**
**MICHAEL A. STEVENS, Greensboro, N.C.**

**THE INCREDIBLE X-MEN**
**COREY WEEKS, Rocky Mount, N.C.**

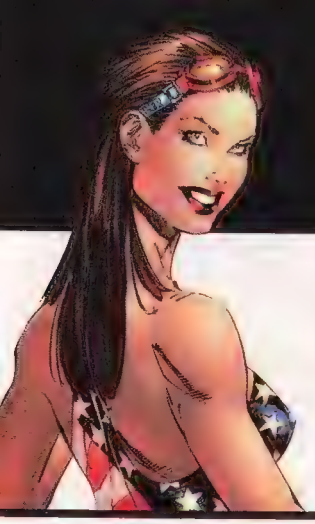
**Want your art to appear on one of these three pages in future issues?** Think you've got what it takes? (Hey—quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Then send your "Drawing Board" entries to:

SUBMIT

**Drawing Board**
**c/o Wizard Entertainment**
**151 Wells Avenue**
**Congers, NY 10920-2064**

**And follow these rules or else:** Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. **You must also include a color photo of yourself.** All entries are nonreturnable and become the property of Wizard Entertainment. Employees of Wizard Entertainment are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? All right, good luck!

# Dive into Fathom!



She's wet, she's wild and she's gorgeously illustrated by Michael Turner! That's right, the number one artist in comics is leaving **Witchblade** for Top Cow's hot new series - **Fathom**!

Strictly limited to only 20,000 copies, the **Fathom Preview Comic** features the first appearance of Fathom! Written and illustrated by Michael (**Witchblade**) Turner, this super-rare comic is a can't miss collector's item!

COFM1P **Fathom Preview 1** (Rare limited edition comic).....$15

## Ascending in Sales

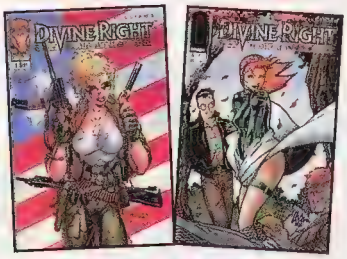
This extremely rare variant cover of **Ascension 1** by David Finch depicts Lucien holding two severed heads!

COAS0 **0** (Rare limited comic)..... $10
COAS1E **1** (Rare variant cover)..... $10

## The Battle Begins!

Featuring art by Joe Madureira, **Battle Chasers Prelude** features the 1st appearance of this title!

COBC1E **Battle Chasers** 1 (Variant cover) $5
COBCP1 **Battle Chasers Prelude** 1 ..... $5
COBCP1G 1 (Super-rare gold logo) .....$10




## Jim Lee's Divine Gift!

The very rare **Divine Right Preview** contains the first appearance of all the major characters!

CODR1E **Divine Right** 1 (Exclusive variant cover).....$5
CODR2V **Divine Right** 2 (Scarce variant cover).....$5
CODR3V **Divine Right** 3 (Limited chromium cover).....$5
CODR4E **Divine Right** 4 (Limited variant cover) .....$5
CODR1PE **Divine Right Preview** 1 (Rare variant cover).....$5

## Honest, She's Shy!

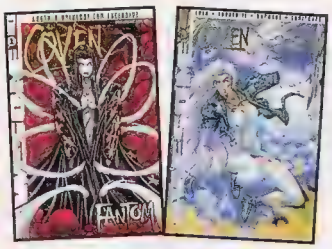
Ariel Chylde reveals it all in the **Darkchylde Illustrated Swimsuit 1**!

CODCH0E **Darkchylde** 0 (Variant cover) .....$5
CODCH5D **Darkchylde** 5 (Variant cover).....$10
CODCHS1E **Darkchylde Swimsuit Illustrated** 1 $5
CODCH1PE **Darkchylde Preview** 1 (Exclusive) ....$5

## Danger Girls

Get the rare first appearance of Danger Girl!

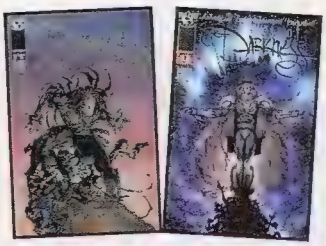
CODGL1E **Danger Girl** 1 (Reg. series - variant) $5
CODGIPE **Danger Girl Preview** 1 (1st appearance).. $5




## The Coven is Golden

Don't miss our exclusive **Coven: Fantom**!

COCOV1E **Coven** 1 (Rare variant cover).....$10
COCOV2G 2 (Gold logo variant cover - Limit 2) ..$10
COCOV#V 4,5 (Scarce variant cover - each) .....$10
COCOVFIE **Coven: Fantom** 1 (Exclusive) .....$5
COCOVFIG 1 (Super-rare gold foil cover) .....$10



## Enter the Darkness

Meet a future inheritor of The Darkness in **Tales of the Darkness 1**. Get the hot variant cover!

CODARK1F **Darkness** 1 (Rare Fan Club Edition) ....$15
CODARK11CR **Darkness** 11 (Rare chromium cover) ....$50
CODARKH1E **Darkness Holiday Pin-up** 1 (Exclusive) ..$5
CODARKT1E **Tales of the Darkness** 1 (Variant cover) ..$5

## The Tenth Rules

**The Tenth 0** features the origin of the Tenth!

COTEN0 **Tenth** 0 (Exclusive) $5
COTENN1E **Tenth** 1 (Variant).. $5
COTENN3V **Tenth** 3 (Variant) $5
COTENN7V **Tenth** 7 (Variant) $5

## Get into the Spirit

Top Cow artists Billy Tan and D-Tron break out on their own with this ultra violent series! This rare Preview features the first appearance of the main characters!

COTAO1E **Spirit of the Tao** 1 (Variant cover) ....$5
COTAO1P **Spirit of the Tao Preview** 1 (Rare)..$10

## Witchblade Exclusives!

Get some of the rarest Witchblade comics!

COWBT1H **Tales of Witchblade** 1/2 (Limited edition) $10
COWBTR1E **Tomb Raider/Witchblade** 1 (Rare) .....$5
COWITB2E **Witchblade** 2 (Scarce encore edition) .....$5
COWITB# **Witchblade** 13-17, 19-22 (Regular cover) ..$3
COWITB18E **Witchblade** 18 (Exclusive variant cover) ....$5
COWITB0 **Witchblade Origin** (Rare exclusive).....$10

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# CLOSING THE GENERATION GAP

You wanted 'em and now you've got 'em! After fielding tons of fan requests, WildStorm is finally set to unleash the first action figures based on one of the hottest comics around. First up for the plastic treatment: the mega-popular teens of **Gen$^{13}$**. At the American International Toy Fair in New York City, prototypes were unveiled for the first four figures, which include **Fairchild**, **Grunge**, **Freefall** and **Threshold**. WildStorm Action Figures is teaming up with D-Boy Inc. (formerly known as Polydata, maker of Star Wars and Gen$^{13}$ vinyl model kits) to produce this line of fully-articulated and highly detailed figures based on the best-selling comic series.

Look for the Gen$^{13}$ action figures to hit stores in August, hopefully in time for the "Gen$^{13}$" animated video feature. If you're looking for more up-to-date information, check out WildStorm online at **www.wildstorm.com** and D-Boy's new Website at **www.d-boy.com**.

**MY GENERATION** The long-awaited Gen$^{13}$ action figures. From left: Fairchild, Freefall and Threshold.

BLOCKS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI; GEN$^{13}$ PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

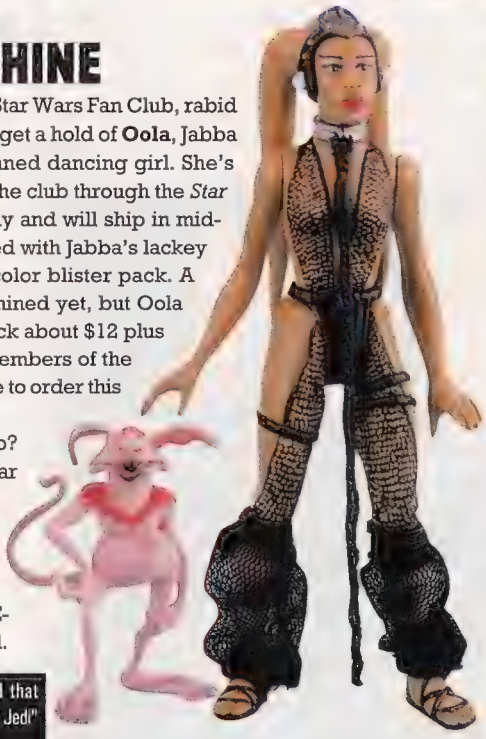
**BY TOM PALMER JR.**

Half-nekkid green women, the Great Cornholio and a McFarlane voodoo doll!

## MEAN GREEN DANCING MACHINE

Thanks to Kenner and the Star Wars Fan Club, rabid Star Wars fans can finally get a hold of **Oola**, Jabba the Hutt's ill-fated green-skinned dancing girl. She's being offered to members of the club through the *Star Wars Insider* newsletter in May and will ship in mid-summer. She'll come packaged with Jabba's lackey **Salacious Crumb** in a four-color blister pack. A final price hasn't been determined yet, but Oola and Crumb should set you back about $12 plus postage and handling. Non-members of the Star Wars Fan Club will be able to order this two-pack in July.

Wanna sign up to the club? Six-issue subscriptions to the Star Wars Insider newsletter are $19.95 and can be ordered by writing to *Star Wars Insider*, P.O. Box 111000, Aurora, CO 80042, or by calling 1-800-TRUE-FAN if you've got a credit card.



**OOLA-LA** Salacious Crumb (left) and that wonderful dancer Oola from "Return of the Jedi" are exclusives from *Star Wars Insider*.

## KABOOM

Exploding, literally, off the pages of Awesome Entertainment's runaway hit *Kaboom!*, comes the first action figure from Jeff Matsuda and Jeph Loeb's new manga-style comic. The Kaboom! action figure is sculpted to look like a Matsuda drawing come to life, and is packaged with "The Pair," two monstrously huge power gloves. These suckers are so big, in fact, that they'll almost dwarf the actual figure of li'l **Geof Sunrise**. Look for Kaboom! to make some noise in comic book stores this August in time for the next *Kaboom!* mini-series.

**EXPLOSIVE** Awesome Entertainment's Kaboom blasts into stores in August.

## MANGA MANIA

Last year's Manga Spawn action figure line was a surprise hit, so McFarlane Toys is taking another trip to the Japanese alternate reality for Manga Spawn II (actually Spawn Series 10). Look for this series to feature more mechanized beasties and nasties like **Manga Freak**, a giant robot decked out with six weapon arms; **Manga Overtkill**, with weapon pods and a launching fist action; **Cyber Tooth**, who can transform to crouch on all fours; **Manga Dead Spawn**, a warrior toting a backpack fulla weapons; **Manga Cyber Violator**, which can assume either a standing or crouching pose and **Manga Samurai Spawn** with a huge honkin' sword and tons o' accessories.

**MANGA** From left: Manga Cyber Violator, Manga Samurai Spawn, Manga Dead Spawn.

OOLA AND SALACIOUS CRUMB PHOTO COURTESY OF STAR WARS INSIDER. KABOOM PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRADER. MANGA SPAWN FIGURES PHOTO COURTESY OF MCFARLANE TOYS.

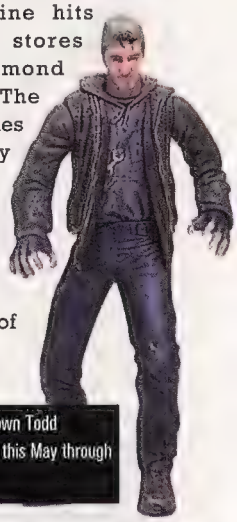
# HUH HUH...COOL

He's studied classical sculpture in Italy and delineated the slinky forms of bad girls from Lady Death to Witchblade, and now distinguished sculptor Clayburn Moore has set his sights on...Beavis and Butt-head? Yep, you heard right. Moore Action Collectibles, makers of the mega-popular Chaos and Witchblade toy lines, has acquired the action figure license for MTV's world-famous duo and, thanks to Moore's near-limitless skill, these toys look to be the best 3-D renderings of flat cartoon characters to date. Beavis and Butt-head start off the first wave of figures, naturally, and are joined by the Great Cornholio, Beavis' sugar-overdosing alter-ego.

**UH...HEH-HEH** From left: Butt-head, Beavis, Great Cornholio.

# KICK ME IN ME BUM!

Always wanted to beat the crap outta Todd McFarlane? Now you have your chance with the brand-new **Todd the Bum** action figure. No, it's not a joke. McFarlane becomes a part of the Spawn toy world this May when a special version of the Spawn Alley playset from the Spawn: the Movie toy line hits comic book stores through Diamond Distributors. The set also includes teeny-tiny Spawn and Violator action figures and a re-creation of the feature film's version of Spawn Alley.



**LI'L TODDY** Get your own Todd McFarlane action figure this May through Diamond Distributors.

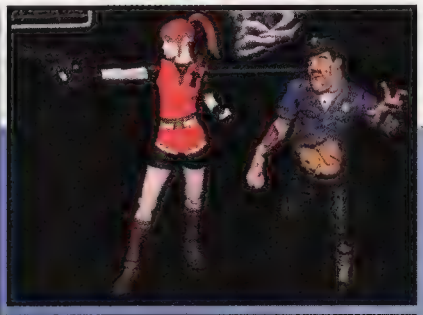
# McFARLANE'S IN A TIFF!

Lookin' for some cool McFarlane action figures you can't get anywhere else? Well, look no further than the McFarlane Toys Collector's Club. Next up for the club's exclusive offer will be a new version of the angelic warrior Tiffany, redecoed and partially resculpted to bring her closer to her comic book appearance. The costume, belt, weapons and hairdo of the original Tiffany figure (from Spawn Series 6) have been altered, so this new figure will be substantially different from the original Tiff. Check into the McFarlane Toys Collector's Club by calling 1-888-99-SPAWN or taking a stroll to the Spawn Website at **www.spawn.com**.

**I THINK WE'RE ALONE NOW** Tiffany is available as a McFarlane Toy Collector's Club exclusive.

# ZESTY ZOMBIE KILLERS

With Toy Biz's eagerly-anticipated Resident Evil toys hitting stores any day now and sales of *Resident Evil 2* nearing 500,000, another helping of action figures from the zombie-infested video game is practically a no-brainer. This summer, look for the next line in Toy Biz's Video Game Superstars lineup to include **Claire Redfield with Zombie Cop**, **Leon Kennedy with the Licker** and **William Birkin** (who's actually a creepy-lookin' monster even though he's got a kinda dopey name).



**EVIL-NESS** *Resident Evil*'s Leon Kennedy with the Licker (left), Claire Redfield with Zombie Cop (top right) and William Birkin (bottom right).

ALL PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHRALOL EXCEPT CORNIGLIO COURTESY OF M.A.C.

# INDY ROUND-UP!

Antarctic Press, the company that jumpstarted the direct market action figure market with the Warrior Nun Areala figure, recently unveiled two new releases which will raise the bar for other independent toy companies. First up is **American Woman**, based on the upcoming comic series by Brian Denham, which hits stores in June. She's followed by **Ra**, member of a new comic book and team of super-gods called Stargods. Ra is outfitted in some kick-ass bio-armor and features enormous wings that swing out for a 26-inch wingspan!

On the way from direct market newcomers Rendition Figures (formerly Bolt Entertainment), are **Snowman**, **Gwynn** and **Webwitch**. Snowman, based on Matt Martin's *Snowman* comic, sports 10 points of articulation and comes with a base and two detachable heads. Also from the pages of *Snowman* is Gwynn, who also has 10 articulation points and is paired with her dog Harley. Webwitch, based on the series by Raff Ienco, stands 7 inches tall and can be attached to her base with removable neural tubes. Snowman and Gwynn hit in April and Webwitch in May.

*The artist formerly known as* ToyFare *Assistant Editor Tom Palmer Jr. now likes to be identified with the silly symbols Œ¥$.*

# WISH LIST

THE 10 FIGURES THAT WIZARD WANTS TO SEE MADE

1) **THUNDERBOLTS (Toy Biz)** Are they heroes or villains? Who cares? They need to be made into action figures now! Serve up each team member paired with his villainous counterpart in special two-packs and fans'll go wild.

2) **SUPERMAN RED/SUPERMAN BLUE (Kenner)** Good ol' Supes is going back to his classic duds, but it would rule to have action figures made of this important part of his history. Make Superman Red and Superman Blue a two-pack and give 'em both light-up features for a certified hit.

3) **SOUTH PARK** Kick ass! No doubt about it, "South Park" toys would rule! Make Kenny a pull-apart toy, give Stan a vomiting action and give the whole gang voice chips for that little extra touch of rudeness.

4) **SPIRIT OF YODA (Star Wars-Kenner)** Kenner's already made a translucent Ben Kenobi, so casting the diminutive Jedi master in clear blue plastic is a no-brainer. And for that matter…how about a ghost Anakin Skywalker?

5) **COMMISSIONER GORDON (New Adventures of Batman and Robin-Kenner)** Animated Batman collectors looking to complete their collection *need* Commissioner Gordon! Sculpted in the cartoon style, the Commish would come with a revolver and a light-up miniature Bat-signal.

6) **AMALGAM (Toy Biz/Kenner)** The possibilities are endless when Marvel and DC's worlds get smooshed together. C'mon Toy Biz! C'mon Kenner! Grab the bull by the horns and give fans Dark Claw, Super-Soldier and Dr. Strangefate.

7) **BLACK WIDOW (Toy Biz)** Daredevil made the cut in a recent Spider-Man assortment, so howzabout figures for some of his supporting cast? A Black Widow from Frank Miller and Klaus Janson's *Daredevil* run, would come complete with spring-loaded Widow's line and magnetic parts so she can walk up the side of your fridge.

8) **REBEL PILOTS GIFT SET (Star Wars-Kenner)** They've made Luke, and they've even made Wedge and Biggs. Now Kenner needs to serve up some more orange jumpsuit-wearin' Rebel pilots to get blasted apart by TIE Fighters. And don't forget everybody's favorite portly pilot, Porkins.

9) **MEDIEVAL AVENGERS (Toy Biz)** When Morgan Le Fay altered reality (*Avengers* #1-#3), the Avengers got medieval with some funky Renaissance duds. Sounds like the perfect action figure tie-in! How cool would it be to own a Captain America figure in real chain mail or a hooded Hawkeye with a longbow?

10) **MARTIAN MANHUNTER (Kenner)** He might not be as popular as Superman or Batman, but the Martian Manhunter is definitely one of the DC Universe's heavy hitters. A Manhunter figure would have to have a cloth cape and snap-on Martian vision blasts for hours of Martian-rific fun.

**Hey!** Keep sending in your requests! You've already made a difference! Drop us a note with your "dream figures" at:

**TOY WISH LIST**
**c/o Wizard Entertainment**
**151 Wells Avenue**
**Congers, NY 10920**

*Or e-mail us at:*
**WizardTGTC@aol.com**

RA PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIRALDI.

# stuff

## COMIC BOOK MERCHANDISE YOU CAN BUY...

By David Borak and the *Wizard* staff

AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL COMICS RETAILER

Who among us doesn't like stuff? Whether it's Admiral Ackbar's "It's a Trap!" mousetrap, *Eat-Man's Gourmet Gun-Gobbling Guide* or Maggott's skin-tinting kit, we're all suckers for comic-related merchandise. Each month, *Wizard* will strive to show you the latest and super-neatest in comic book statues, posters, pins, magnets, shirts and other goodies.

In short, if it's cool, and if it's stuff, you'll find it here.

**BIG BROTHER** Hulk unhappy. Hulk have no arms to smash with.

## HULK'S LITTLE BUST

Bowen Designs and Marvel Comics are producing the Incredible Hulk Mini-Bust ($42). This 5 1/2-inch-tall mini-bust shows a serious-looking Hulk draped with the remains of his shirt. Sculpted by Randy Bowen, the cold-cast porcelain bust is fully painted and comes with a certificate of authenticity. Each bust is individually numbered and available in May.

**TEEN SPIRIT** Shirtless bohunk Grunge is cool. And cold-cast.

## A STATUE MOST GRUNGY

Available this May, Polydata presents the Grunge 1/6 Scale Pre-Painted Statue Kit ($170). Based on a design by former *Gen*[13] artist J. Scott Campbell, the 12-inch-tall cold-cast Grunge Statue Kit comes hand-painted and ready to assemble, and is limited to just 1,300 editions.

## GREEN WITH RING ENVY

DC Comics delivers a nifty replica of Silver Age Green Lantern Hal Jordan's power ring ($59.95)! This rhodium-plated, hand-polished ring is made of cast-brass with a green enamel appliqué and a translucent center stone. The rings are available right now in sizes 6 to 13, and are limited to only 5,000 copies.

**WITH THIS RING...** You won't be able to fight supervillains. Sorry.

# HOT STUFF!!!!!!!!

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

## SODA GONE WILD

WildStorm Comics joins forces with Jones Soda to bring you the Jones Soda Comic Assortment. Jones Soda—the "microbrew" of sodas—will feature color artwork of your favorite WildStorm comics on its labels. You'll find the characters from *Monkeyman and O'Brien*, *Divine Right*, *Gen*[13], *Desperadoes* and *Astro City* on the labels of these super soda bottles. Jones Soda is available in such flavors as: Cream, Root Beer, Cola, Blue Bubblegum, Strawberry Lime, Cherry, Fufu Berry, Grape and many more! The Jones Soda Comic Assortment only comes in case lots of 24 12-oz. bottles of assorted flavors ($36 per case).

Jones Soda is not available in most supermarket chains, so look for it in your local comic book store this May. For more information on Jones Soda, check out its Web homepage at **www.jonessoda.com.**

**"POP" CULTURE** Get a comic buzz with Jones Soda.

## BATS, TO A 'T'

Graphitti Designs and DC Comics have released an all-new Batman Symbol T-shirt featuring the classic black Bat-emblem on a gray background. The T-shirt, based on the costume Batman wears in the animated series "The New Batman Adventures," shows the Bat-emblem on the front of a dark-gray, 100-percent-cotton heavyweight shirt. Look for the new Batman T-shirt ($16.95, $19.95 for XXL) this May. Also, check out the nifty-cool "Clerks" T-shirt ($17.95, $19.95 for XXL), which shows the film's slackers Jay and Silent Bob with artwork by *Mage*'s Matt Wagner.

**TEEING OFF** It's the shirt. Chicks dig the shirt.


NOW YOU CAN HAVE YOUR GOAT...

...AND READ IT TOO!

PRIEST! GIFFEN!

THE GOAT

HEAVILY ARMORED ESPIONAGE DEADLY TUBER-SHEEP™

"Inaction" Figure & Special Event

APRIL '98

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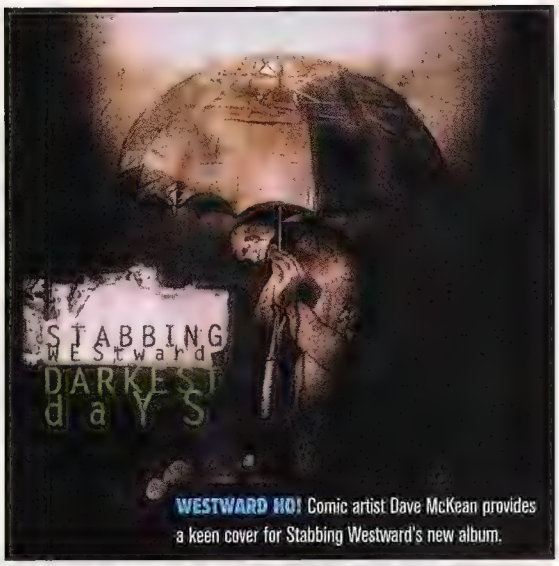
## SPAWN GETS MOUSEY

Computer Expressions brings you two computer mousepads featuring that Hell-bent hero, Spawn ($12 each)! First, you'll find a full-color pad featuring a portrait of Spawn complete with all his hellacious accessories. There's also a mousepad with a full-color image of Spawn and the chain-wielding angel Tiffany. Look for both in computer stores everywhere this May.

**HELLUVA PAD** Run your mouse all over Spawn and Tiffany—they won't mind.




**WESTWARD HO!** Comic artist Dave McKean provides a keen cover for Stabbing Westward's new album.

## A PIERCING COVER

Noted comic artist Dave McKean (*Sandman, Arkham Asylum*) is providing cover art for rock band Stabbing Westward's third album, *Darkest Days* (around $14 to $16). Beyond McKean's cool art, this album contains the original version of "Torn Apart," which appeared, in remixed format, on the "Spawn" movie soundtrack. *Days* is produced by Columbia Records and is out right now.

## ZIPPO FOR ZOMBIES

When fighting the undead, don't forget your Zombieworld Zippo Lighter ($29.95). Dark Horse Comics presents this genuine Zippo lighter based on its monthly *Zombieworld* comic. The lighter comes with an illustrated color logo design and a brushed chrome finish. Look for it in May.

**FLAME ON!** Zombies hate flames. But like brains. Mmm...brains.

## C•23 ON DECK

WildStorm's new comic series *C•23* is more than a funnybook—the company, through Wizards of the Coast, has turned it into a collectible card game. Players can become one of the future's genetically enhanced Colonists (Who each have a 23rd chromosome—get it?) and battle the insectoid Angelan HyBreeds in this game, which features art by Jim Lee and his WildStormers. And card-game amateurs (or avoiders) shouldn't fret; WotC's new ARC System makes the game easy to learn. Plus, *C•23* is compatible with every other ARC System game. The 162-card set, with a suggested retail of $5.99 per 40-card starter deck and $2.49 per 12-card booster pack, is in stores now.

**23 GETS CARDED** Jim Lee and other WildStorm artists draw pretty pictures for the *C•23* card game.

**Check your local stores for availability of all these funky-fresh products. Or ask your friendly neighborhood comic store to special-order 'em for ya!**

**HEY!** Are you a company putting out fun comic-related merchandise like statues, T-shirts, novelties, magnets, etc.? We'd like to preview 'em! Please send all info and sample products to:

**Stuff**
**151 Wells Avenue**
**Congers, NY 10920-2064**

DREAMSMITH STUDIO'S **BOOK** 72 pages • B&W • No Ads • $3.50

**Good Art. Good Story. Good Deal.**

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**3 Stories Continue**

**NORSE SAGA** - Time for a little storytelling as we hear about the "true" history of the Norse.

**CHIMERA** - Tobalt discovers the *Child* of Prophecy and she's **18?!**

**ANNA** - Karol Kostya returns to the forge one last time to shape the destiny of his family.

**These Three Stories in Every Issue**

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**Kevin Sharpe** (Vengeance of Vampirella) and **George Perez** (Avengers)

**Wrap-Around Alternate Cover by:**
**Bart Sears** (Conan) and **Andy Smith** (Generation X)

**Interiors by:**
**Steve Ellis** (Lobo)
**Mike Lilly**
**Chris Dreier** (Untouchables)
**Rich Perrotta** (X-Men Unlimited)
**Bob Wiacek** (Captain America)

**Medieval Fantasy Monthly. BOOK #3 on the Stands in July. Ask Your Retailer to Order Now.**

DREAMSMITH STUDIOS
SOMETHING DIFFERENT. AS USUAL.

WWW.DREAMSMITHSTUDIOS.COM

# video STUFF

By Matthew Danish

**Video killed the radio star, but who's complaining? Certainly not us. Welcome to "Video Stuff," a column where we let loose with news, previews, reviews and game tips for the hottest, most spanktacular console and PC games around. Fire up the controllers...it's video game time.**

## THE MISSING LINK

Past, present or future, Link is the man. Now, the video game hero of millions is set to go time-traveling in Nintendo's upcoming *The Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time* for the N64.

*Zelda* will be out later this year in cartridge format and, while details are sketchy, will be compatible with Nintendo's soon-to-be-released disk drive, allowing players to boost Link's attributes, and then save, and play with, the character in a new Zelda game for Nintendo's upcoming disk drive (DD). Michael Puccini, a public-relations rep from Nintendo, says this 3-D adventure will allow players to ride a horse and play as both an adult and child Link. "*Legend of Zelda* for the N64 will be revolutionary," Puccini says. "The Rumble Pack, in particular, will become an active, integral part of the game's strategy in a way never seen before." The Rumble Pack will assist in gameplay by shaking the controller when a player walks by a hidden object or location.

## A SLICE OF KATANA

Sega's new 128-bit Katana game machine should appear in U.S. stores in late 1998. However, the machine, like so much these days, is shrouded in multiple veils of fog and mystery. A Sega source has informed *Wizard* that Sega is now in the process of crafting a partnership with software giant Microsoft, which will aid in the design, packaging and distribution of the machine. Except for the news that 12 to 15 games will debut with the system this winter, little specific or technical information is being released.

Incidentally, the katana—a traditional warrior's short sword—has been used by Japanese warriors past and present. As mysterious fifth-century author Sun Tzu wrote, "Subtle, insubstantial, the swordfighter leaves no trace; divinely mysterious, he is inaudible. The moon waxes and the moon wanes." And so it goes...

**TIME BANDIT** Join Link in his quest to fight the world's angriest shrub.

## 'YOUNGBLOOD' INFUSED IN JULY

GT Interactive's oft-delayed *Youngblood* roleplaying/video game, based on the Rob Liefeld comic book series from Awesome Entertainment, is coming to the Sony PlayStation on July 2nd. The game features 13 members of Youngblood (Shaft, Knightsabre, Chapel, Cybernet, Psi-Fire, Vogue, Riptide, Badrock, Die Hard and other, hidden characters), each equipped with weapons and individualized fighting moves.

**GOT 'BLOOD?** As a member of Youngblood, you can travel to strange lands, meet exotic villains and kill them!

## 'BABYLON 5' FLIES TO THE PC

Gamemaker Sierra On-line is developing a *Babylon 5* space-combat simulation due for release on PCs in the winter. The game is part of an extensive deal with Warner Brothers to create several interactive games and CD-ROMs based on the popular television series. Not much is known about the game, save for the fact that it's a space-combat simulation aiming to recreate the actual look and feel of the TV show's high-tech dogfights, say published reports. ■

**UP AHEAD**

**Mortal mutant combat, merry zombie massacres, motor-vating with the Mach 5...and more!**

# X-MEN VS. STREET FIGHTER

**MANUFACTURER:** Capcom
**PLATFORM:** Sony PlayStation
**SUGGESTED RETAIL:** $49.95; available summer 1998

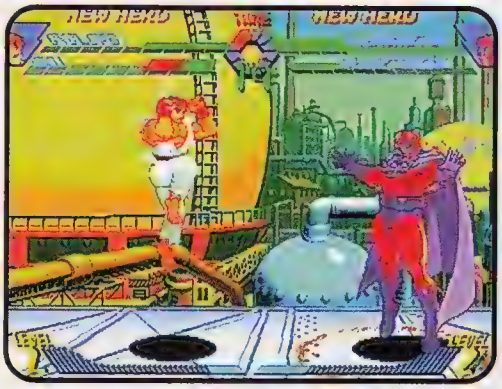
On the battlefield of life, there's the quick and *el muerto*. With ultra-fast gameplay, a tremendous menu of playable fighters ripped right from X-Men comics and *Street Fighter* video games, and in-your-bloody-face fighting action, it's not hard to guess the category *X-Men vs. Street Fighter* falls into.

*Wizard* got its hands on a preview copy, which contained 17 playable X-Men and Street Fighter characters, from Akuma to Wolverine. A straightforward 2-D fighter, *X-Men* breaks no new ground, but provides a healthy dose of hyperactive violence and good fun. As always, the game asks users to punch and kick their way through a series of one-on-one battles. Get to the final screen and players will face the Sentinel, a blue wall of steel that feels little, if any, pity as it imposes massive waves of destructive force on a player's character.

Sure, it's great fun to pit, say, Southern belle Rogue against the monstrous steroid-freak Zangief, but the real fun of *X-Men* is in how the many buttons/options on the PlayStation controller are utilized to give each fighter a broad repertoire of hellacious holds, strikes and maneuvers. There's enough moves here to keep even the most jaded fan of ultimate fighting championships interested.

**TRY IT...** If you like *Street Fighter II* or *EX*, or *X-Men: Children of the Atom*, you'll groove on *X-Men vs. Street Fighter*.

Battlefields for *X-Men* are also varied, and provide some diverting eye candy. From the Jerry Springer-esque talk show studio with cheering gangs of young teenage punks, to space stations, a public park and a police crime scene, *X-Men vs. Street Fighter* looks as pretty as it plays. ■




**DEATH MATCH** Slice and dice with the X-Men and Street Fighters—all of whom cast perfectly circular shadows.

# SPEED RACER

**MANUFACTURER:** Jaleco
**PLATFORM:** Sony PlayStation
**SUGGESTED RETAIL:** $49.95; available now

Step behind the wheel of the powerful Mach 5. Watch the other racers eat your dust and relive the nostalgia of the classic animated TV show "Speed Racer." The only thing that's missing from this frantic racing game is the annoying kid Spritle and his monkey pal Chim-Chim hiding out in the Mach 5's trunk.

Here he comes...! Here comes *Speed Racer* from Jaleco USA, which lets players race on three basic courses against nine other computer-controlled cars. Each track can be extended for a longer race, and the game gives users a choice of three versions of the Mach 5. The Mach 5s come in automatic transmission and stick-shift modes, and include Speed's trademark array of seven built-in weapons—including rotary sawblades, a periscope with an aqua-propulsion system for travelling underwater, and autojacks for jumping the Mach into the air and over those pesky obstacles. Each feature is activated by simply pressing a button on the steering wheel. The game also includes a good crop of hidden cars, such as the Demon, the Fireant and Speed's older brother Racer X's Shooting Star, each of which has a distinct advantage, like better road grip or an ultra-high top speed.

**TRY IT...** If you like *Twisted Metal*, *Carmaggedon* or *Mario Kart64*, your heart will race for *Speed Racer*.

Those game-players who like classic cartoons or are fans of the original "Speed Racer" TV series will need to add this game to their collections. The racing graphics and car maneuverability stand up to the plethora of previous race games that have hit both the consoles and arcades. *Speed Racer's* sole flaw, perhaps, is that the races are difficult since the complicated Sony controller, with so many gadgets, can take time to master. (Check out the "Cheat Sheet" sidebar for this game's special features.) ■

**BURN RUBBER** Race the Mach 5, jump over obstacles with your autojacks (shown above, top) and ignore the screams of the little punk kid in the trunk.

MORE→

# RESIDENT EVIL 2

**MANUFACTURER:** Capcom
**PLATFORM:** Sony PlayStation
**SUGGESTED RETAIL:** $49.95; available now

"Freeze! Who are you?" the burly shop owner asks, just before the window comes crashing in. The man gurgles his last words as five blood-streaked zombies pull him to the ground and feast on his innards.

There's no time for sentiment, though. It's time to start shooting.

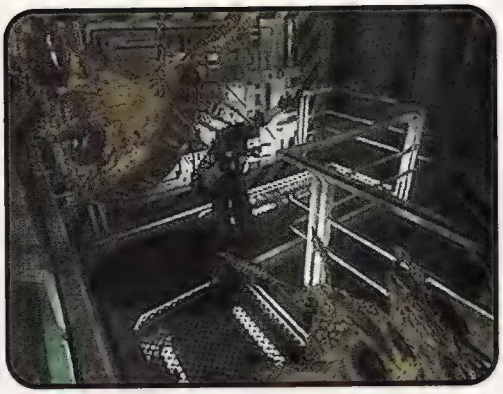
With brilliantly rendered animation-quality graphics and a classic George A. Romero-type storyline, Capcom's 3-D shoot-'em-up *Resident Evil 2* disproves the cliché about sequels and pushes the Sony PlayStation hardware to its limits.

Players choose one of *Evil*'s two heroes, Leon or Claire, and lead him/her on a mission to slay Mr. X, the CEO of Umbrella Incorporated, thus saving Raccoon City from Umbrella's weird zombie-producing toxo-mutagenic experiments. There are four basic missions—two per character—plus multiple difficulty levels and additional hidden games that can only be accessed when the four base versions are completed within certain times and with minimal first-aid treatments.

**TRY IT...** If you like *Resident Evil, Clock Tower* or *Tomb Raider II*, you'll lose a limb over *Resident Evil II*.

The gameplay is smooth; the characters can run, climb, jump and, most importantly, fire bullets from a pistol or shotgun, all while moving in a 3-D world. Hold the "R1" button to aim, use the direction pad to swing the gun barrel left or right and press the "X" button to blast a hole right through a zombie's chest. Aim the shotgun up with the direction pad and a zombie's head can be blown clean off, sending its limp body to the ground like a meatball rolling off the edge of the dinner table.

This game's only drawback is that completing all the levels and solving all the puzzles is a 40-hour pay-your-own-benefits job. Who said saving the world from zombies would be easy? ■



**RAID, ANYONE?** Remember when you first bought a bug zapper? Well, now it's revenge time.

SPECIAL MOVES & SECRET CODES

# CHEATSHEET

## GO, SPEED RACER, GO!

Want some neat secret codes to *Speed Racer*? Check 'em out:

• HIDDEN CARS–Go to the car select screen, press and hold "R1," "R2," "L1" and "L2," then press and hold "Select," press down on the D-pad, and press the triangle button.

• HIDDEN VIEWS–During a race, pause the game. Then, press the right button on the D-pad five times and left on the D-pad five times. Unpause the game and hit both "R1" and "R2" at once to reveal hidden views.

• THE TOMB OF CRANIUM–To access a hidden region called the Tomb of Cranium, get behind the wheel of the Demon, activate the rotary sawblades and water-sealed interior, and then, while maintaining a speed of 60 to 70 mph, knock down all the columns on the left side of the road. The columns in front of the tomb entrance needn't be knocked over. ■

SPEED RACER

# webline

## IT CAME FROM THE WORLD WIDE WEB

### www.speedracer.com

The Official Speed Racer Virtual Pit Stop. All manner of things related to Speedy and the Mach 5. But a Speed Racer credit card? Why? *Why?*

### www.angelfire.com/pa/nightmares/livingdead.html

Cool "Night of the Living Dead" zombie links, including info on the upcoming film "Night of the Day of the Dead."

### www.jaleco.com

Check out other cool Jaleco games like *Punky The Skunk*. Perhaps *Wizard* readers can figure out how to help Punky find his friends.

### www.lucasarts.com

LucasArts Entertainment's Website. Makers of such Sony PlayStation games as *Star Wars: Masters of Teräs Käsi*.

### www.wizardworld.com

Reviews of all the "Street Fighter II V" animated videos.

### cgw.gamespot.com/news/234e.html

This Website presents *Computer Gaming World*'s interview with *Youngblood* creator and Awesome Entertainment President Rob Liefeld. ■

WIN!

"Unleash the Beast Within" Envelope Art Contest

1. No purchase necessary. **To enter, draw any character morphing into a beast on a standard size letter envelope (9 1/2" x 4 1/4") and send it with your name, address, gender, date of birth, phone number and your answers to the following questions: 1) Do you own a PlayStation game console? 2) How many games do you intend to purchase this year? Send the envelope to: Unleash the Beast Within Contest, c/o Linzee International, 1306 Old County Road, Belmont, CA 94002. Entries must be received by June 15, 1998.** You may send as many entries as you wish, but each entry must be sent in separately. Sony Computer Entertainment America (the "Sponsor") is not responsible for lost, late, mutilated, illegible, incomplete, postage due or misdirected entries. All entries become the sole property of Sponsor and none will be returned. Entries not satisfying these Official Rules will be automatically disqualified.

2. Judging Criteria: All entries received will be judged by a panel of independent judges composed of video game industry professionals. Judging of the entries will begin on or about June 16, 1998, with a final decision to be made on or about October 15, 1998. The decision of the judges will be final and binding in all respects. By participating, entrants agree to be bound by the Official Rules. Judging Criteria: 1) neatness 25%, 2) artistic ability 25%, and 3) creativity 50%. Sponsor reserves the right to refuse any entries featuring gratuitous depiction of violence or sexual behavior, or positive depictions of alcohol or tobacco. The drawing must be the original, unpublished and sole work of the entrant. Winners will be selected from all eligible entries received by mail on or before June 15, 1998.

3. Prizes: One (1) Grand Prize winner will win a 27" Sony Television, a PlayStation game console, a copy of Bloody Roar™ software, four (4) software titles of Sponsor's discretion (approximate retail value of $1,100.00). Three (3) First Prize winners will receive a PlayStation game console, a copy of Bloody Roar software (approximate retail value of $250.00). Ten (10) Second Prize winners will receive a PlayStation branded T-shirt, a copy of Bloody Roar software (approximate retail value of $65.00). Sponsor reserves the right to substitute a prize of equal value if prize is unavailable. Prize is non-transferable and no substitutions allowed. Winner shall be notified by mail and/or telephone. Once notified, allow 8-10 weeks for delivery of prize.

4. Eligibility: Promotion open to residents of United States only. Return of any prize/prize notification as undeliverable will result in disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. Winner will be required to sign an affidavit of eligibility/release of liability/prize acceptance which must be returned within 7 days of receipt. Affidavit must be signed and return within the stated time period or prize may be forfeited. Additionally, as a condition to receiving the prize, the winner shall be required to execute an assignment transferring and assigning all of his or her rights, title and interest in the drawing submitted as an entry to Sponsor. If the winner is a minor, then prize will be awarded to winner's parent or legal guardian. By acceptance of prize, winners agree to the use of their name and/or likeness for purposes of advertising, trade, or promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. Employees of the Sponsor and Judges and their parent and affiliated companies and their families are not eligible. Neither the Sponsor nor its affiliates, subsidiaries, division or related companies are responsible for any damages, taxes, or expenses that winners might incur as result of this contest or receipt of prize.

5. Winner List: For a list of winners, send a SASE to "Unleash the Beast Within Contest Winners" and send to address above. Requests must be received by October 30, 1998. Please allow four (4) weeks for delivery of winners list.

6. Restrictions: Void where prohibited or restricted by law.

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in the heat of battle, you morph into a half-human beast, unlocking more speed more power more moves

enter the "Bloody Roar" Envelope Art Contest, you could win big...

# do this

# unleash the beast within

draw a character morphing into a beast on the back of a standard-sized letter envelope and send it in by July 1, '98 to...

Unleash the Beast Within Contest
c/o Linzee International
1306 Old County Road
Belmont, CA 94002
(read the contest rules)

# win this

a Sony 27" Trinitron TV, PlayStation game consoles, copies of Bloody Roar™ and other great stuff..!
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AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS:
CONTEST
"Join the Re:Gex"

# PRIZES

**GRAND PRIZE (1):** The big winner will have his name appear in an issue of *Re:Gex*, Rob Liefeld's new project which combines elements of myth, magic and science—and will get a copy of that issue signed by Liefeld. We'll also load the winner down with other fun stuff—a Liefeld-signed copy of the *Re:Gex Wizard World Chicago* exclusive comic, the Genie action figure, the Genie Wizard World Chicago exclusive action figure, a copy of the *Youngblood* video game for the pc and a one-year subscription to all the Awesome titles. Whoa, doggy!

**SECOND PRIZE (25):** Twenty-five almost-as-lucky readers each win a Liefeld signed copy of *Re:Gex*, a Liefeld-signed copy of the *Re:Gex Wizard World Chicago* exclusive comic, the Genie action figure, and the Genie Wizard World Chicago exclusive action figure.

How do you get your grubby little paws on this stuff? Simple. Just tell us in 50 words (or less) what you think constitutes the worst superhero. What type of attributes would a really bad hero have? Maybe he's a flame-throwing midget. Or a mutant with the power to transform into a *Wizard* editor. Whatever. Send in your description with a completed entry form and we'll pick the most creative as the winners. Get crackin'!

THIS CONTEST IS SPONSORED BY AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT, HOME OF THE COMIC INDUSTRY'S FINEST BAKED GOODS.

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ENTER NOW!

Fill this out, attach your entry and put it all in an envelope. Send to:

**"Join the Re:Gex" Contest**
**c/o Wizard Entertainment**
**P.O. Box 118**
**Congers, NY 10920-0118.**

## OBEY THIS LAW!

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, Awesome Entertainment, their immediate families and whoever doesn't like really, really big guns. C'mon...they make bigger holes. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "Join the Re:Gex" Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by June 30, 1998.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, mutilated or really offensive entries. Winners will be selected based on originality and creativity by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Too much red meat in your diet will kill you. Winners will be notified no later than August 4, 1998. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, we'll be very, very upset, but the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about July 14, 1998.

For a list of winners, available after July 14, 1998, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "Join the Re:Gex" Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

## "Join the Re:Gex" Contest Entry Form

CONTEST DEADLINE JUNE 30, 1998!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

E-mail _____

**DID YOU ATTACH YOUR ENTRY?**

# HOMEMADE HEROES

## THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES

**HEY, QUIT YER WHININ', YA BABIES. They don't make figures of your favorite characters? You think you could make better ones than those that already exist? Either way, it's time to put up or shut up. The figures you see here were crafted by ordinary readers just like you. Starting with simple store-bought action figures, these go-getters combined a little imagination with some stuff from around the house. They will now be judged by the highest authority...us!**

## GRAND PRIZE WINNER

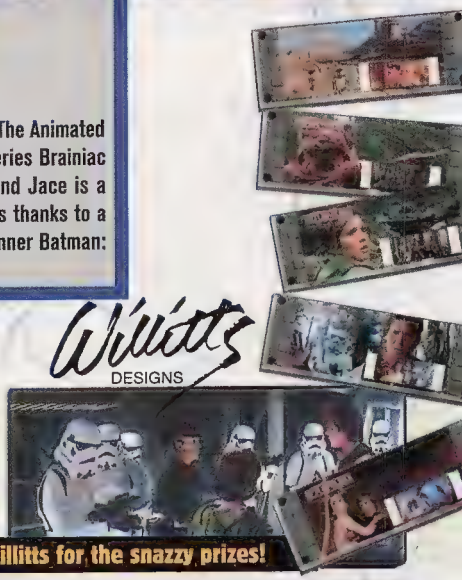
### SPACE GHOST, MOLTAR, BLIP, SPACE SPECTER AND JACE

**Jack Larsen of Milwaukee, Wis.**

Both Space Ghost (center) and Space Specter (back right) are repainted Kenner Batman: The Animated Series Batmen. Moltar (back left) was made from a Kenner Superman: The Animated Series Brainiac and some Super Sculpey. Blip (the little guy) was, uh, a Fisher-Price Baby Gorilla. And Jace is a redoctored Kenner Batman Forever Robin. Oh, yeah, the cameo by DC's Hitman (inset) is thanks to a Kenner Street Guardian Superman body, a Kenner Batman: TAS Bruce Wayne head, a Kenner Batman: TAS Dick Grayson mask and a Toy Biz Punisher gun.

## WHAT WE GAVE AWAY!

The highly talented Grand Prize winner flies off with six—that's *six*—"Star Wars" movie cels, while each of the other creators scores one cel. Top-notch work, people!




Many thanks to Willitts for the snazzy prizes!

## "FRIDAY THE 13TH" JASON VORHEES AND UH, STORM

**Hanns Stresius of Duisburg, Germany**

Now here's a creative soul. Before Todd McFarlane debuted his Jason figure at Toy Fair '98, Hanns took a Toy Biz Hawkeye figure and created the classic hockey-masked killer...and took the liberty of showing us a small demonstration of Jason's masterful abilities.

## "AGE OF APOCALYPSE" BISHOP

**James H. Sheridan of Roslyn Heights, N.Y.**

Taking the head and upper torso of a Toy Biz X-Men/X-Force Krule figure, the arms of a Toy Biz X-Men/X-Force Cable, the legs of a Toy Biz X-Men Bishop and the belt of a Toy Biz X-Men: Generation X White Queen, this Roslyn Heights native has captured the essence of the alternate-reality Bishop.

## THE PHANTOM

**Craig and Julie Frey of Pittsburgh, Pa.**

Sure, there already was a Phantom figure (in Galoob's Defenders of the Earth line), but it's nowhere near as cool as this baby. This Phantom was created from a Toy Biz Fantastic Four Silver Surfer figure.

## ANIMAL MAN AND GRANT MORRISON

**Leslie and JD Hancock of Cedar Park, Texas**

Kenner's The New Batman Adventures Crime Solver Nightwing body, along with some epoxy for the mask, was altered into this pre-Vertigo Animal Man. And, as a tribute, Leslie used the same substances to create the homage to Grant Morrison, former writer of DC Comics' *Animal Man*.

**Do you want in on the fun?** To enter the homemade figure contest, send at least TWO well-lit, clear, color photographs **(No Polaroids, and put 'em in cool or funny poses!)**, along with a color photo of yourself, your name, address, a DETAILED DESCRIPTION of how you created your figure, your full phone number (including area code) and even your e-mail address to:

SUBMIT!

**Homemade Heroes**
**c/o Wizard Entertainment**
**P.O. Box 118**
**Congers, NY 10920-0118**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.WIZARDWORLD.COM

Chuck Dixon*
Scott McDaniel*
*Nightwing*

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Payment must be included with all orders. Send check or money order payable to Entertainment Conventions, or pay by credit card. We accept Visa, MasterCard and Discover. Credit card orders must include the cardholder's name, the complete card number and expiration date. With payment, please send your name, address, date of birth and the specific days you will be attending to: Wizard World Chicago, P.O. Box 656, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598.

Tickets are sent via first-class mail for all orders received by 6/24/98. All orders received after that date will be held for pickup at the door. All orders received after 7/15/98 will not be processed and will be returned to sender.

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Alex Ross
*Kingdom Come, Uncle Sam, Superman Forever*

*NEW TO CHICAGO IN '98! MORE SPECIAL GUESTS TO BE ANNOUNCED!

# CHARACTER PROFILE

# JESSE CUSTER

## From the pages of PREACHER

BY MATTHEW BRADY

He's out to find God. Literally. Jesse Custer's a man of the cloth with the power to make others do his bidding. And when Jesse meets God, he's going to whup His holy ass.

## ORIGIN

**Jesse Custer lived a near-idyllic childhood** until his maternal grandmother, Miss Marie, forced the Custer family to move back to her Louisiana plantation, Angelville. Shortly after moving, Custer's father was suddenly killed (and his mother dragged off to an unknown fate) at the order of his evil grandmother, and she raised him in a horrific life of extreme Christian fundamentalism mingled with sadistic torture.

Custer finally managed to run away to Texas, where he met and fell desperately in love with Tulip O'Hare. Together, the two led a life of rebellious freedom, which quickly ended when Grandma's boys came to take Custer "home." Punished beyond belief, and his spirit finally broken, Custer entered the ministry and was given a church in Annville, Texas.

Disillusioned with God, Custer wallowed in self-pity until the entity known as Genesis blasted through his church, incinerating his parishioners and taking up residence in Custer's mind.

Custer learned Genesis was a half-angel/half-demon hybrid that enabled the preacher to force people to do whatever he told them to, through a power called "The Word." He also discovered Genesis was held captive in Heaven because God feared the incredible power wielded by Genesis.

When Genesis broke free, God abandoned Heaven to roam the Earth, and Custer has made it his mission to not only find God, but to force him to do His job in Heaven.

## VITAL STATS

**Real Name:** Jesse Custer
**Age:** 27
**Height:** 6' 2"
**Weight:** 190 lbs.
**Hair Color:** Black
**Eye Color:** Brown
**First Appearance:** *Preacher* #1
**Title Currently Appearing in:** *Preacher*
**Major Enemies:** God, Starr, The Grail, all of Heaven, plenty of Hell

## RECENTLY...

**After bonding with Genesis**, Custer reunited with O'Hare and another companion of his, an Irish vampire named Cassidy. Together, they set out on a search for God. During the journey, the trio has been pursued by the Saint of Killers, who had been dispatched by angels to kill Custer. Custer and company also attracted the attention of the Grail, a cult bent on triggering Armageddon in the year 2000 and unveiling Custer as the new Messiah.

In San Francisco, agent Starr of the Grail caught up with the trio and, in a moment of self-sacrifice, Cassidy posed as Custer, prompting Starr to take him to the Grail mountain base in the south of France. Custer and O'Hare followed, and Custer infiltrated the Grail base, where he met the Grail's most-prized captive: the angelic "father" of the entity residing within him.

The angel told Custer that he and Genesis are inexorably linked, essentially one being in human form, and that Custer himself had all the answers he needed about Genesis. To discover the answers, the angel told Custer to go on a vision quest, a search deep within his own soul. Custer then rescued Cassidy, as the base's self-destruct mechanism blew the mountain to kingdom come.

The trio moved on to New Orleans, where, with the aid of a voodoo priest, Custer learned that to find God, he'd have to let Genesis become the dominant personality. His path once again set, the three set off for a place where Custer felt compelled to go: Monument Valley.

Custer and his friends were not alone, however.

Starr, with his commandos, was in the Valley—as well as the Saint. Hotter heads prevailed, and the Grail forces detonated an atomic bomb. Cassidy and O'Hare barely managed to escape, while Custer and Starr were missing and presumed dead.

Lost in the desert, Custer wandered for days, and finally met a mysterious stranger who gave him insights about his role in life, as well as Genesis. Gaining clarity from the meeting, Custer returned to civilization steeled to finish the quest he'd begun.

## LOOKING AHEAD

**As if things couldn't get worse** after the desert situation, Custer's entire world comes crashing down when he's handed the most miserable setback in his entire life. "We're going to see him go from an all-time high to an all-time low," *Preacher* writer Garth Ennis says. "Everything is just going to be turned upside down in issue #40; it's where the series has been building for the past five or six issues."

According to Ennis, the big change really, really spins Custer and the series off in a different direction. "Instead of the search for God, he scales things down, and goes on a journey deep into Texas," Ennis says. "His trip is fairly aimless, but he ends up discovering quite a bit about himself on the way—about his past, and about his parents. As a result of the trip, in fact, he looks as if he's going to be trading his collar for a career in a law-enforcement profession. It should be a fairly interesting twist to the series."

*North Carolina writer Matthew Brady is both thrilled and extremely nervous about his upcoming Character Profile of God.*

## HIGHLIGHTS

RECOMMENDED READING

*PREACHER* #1–#7–The story that started it all! Meet Jesse Custer and company, along with the Saint of Killers and Arseface, for the first time. This tale gives the term "screw yourself" a new meaning. (Also reprinted in the *Preacher: Gone to Texas* trade paperback.)

*PREACHER* #8–#12–Jesse and Tulip get taken back to Angelville to meet Grandma. (Reprinted in the *Preacher: Until the End of the World* paperback.)

*PREACHER* #19–#24–In an epic titled "Crusaders," Custer attempts to get Cassidy outta the Grail's stronghold. Custer vs. Starr! The Saint vs. the Grail! Guns! Explosions! All this, and Cass meets God too. An engrossing storyline that massively affected several stars of the series. (Reprinted in the *Preacher: Proud Americans* paperback, which also contains stories from #18, #25 and #26.)

# TOP 10 HEROES & VILLAINS

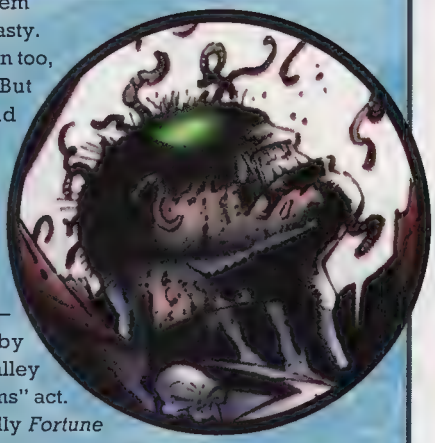
**This list doesn't track the number of copies which a specific character sells each month. It doesn't pay attention to any kind of sales meter. This list is a roster of the 10 comic book characters with the strongest fan following—nothing more, nothing less.**

## 1 WITCHBLADE

Justification? You want justification as to why Witchy-Poo is the most popular comic *chica* on the four-color racks? We'll give you justification! Witchblade appears in the ol' one-hole for a number of reasons: She's the star of her own hyper-successful series (that'd be *Witchblade*, Einstein), the inspiration for a second popular spinoff title, (*Tales of the Witchblade*) and is the character that propelled a *real* guy (penciler Michael Turner) to stardom. And, if that wasn't enuff for ya, rumor has it, she's a great kisser and scored over 1500 on her SATs. How's *that* for reasons?

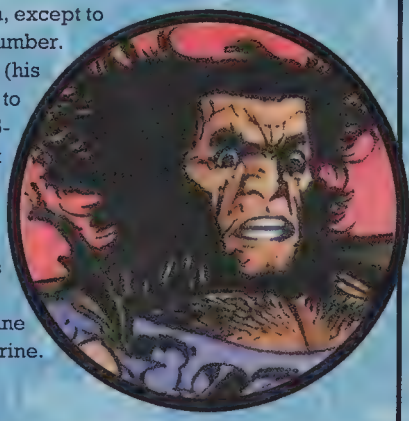
## 2 SPAWN

Oh, yeah. Love them worms. Darned tasty. And high in protein too, don'tcha know? But why Spawn would choose such a low-rent diet when he's got money to burn is beyond us. Don't think he's got the long green? Oh, please—don't be fooled by this "I live in an alley with a buncha bums" act. Spawn's practically *Fortune* 500 material. Geez, the guy's got a movie, a TV show and nine (Nine!) friggin' series of toys—all of which carry his name—to his credit. He should be livin' in a mansion, not an alley. Ross Perot, move over.



## 3 WOLVERINE

*Wizard*'s little-known facts of comics, (vol. 53): Wolverine's hair (all his hair, that is) weighs 47 pounds! No kiddin'! You can look it up in any of them "Marvel Universe" handbooks if ya want, or you can just check out this picture. Wolverine is one of the most popular characters in all of comicdom, except to one person: His plumber. That poor bastard (his name's Lenny) has to buy Dran-O in 55-gallon drums just to try to keep up with the sink clogs at the X-Mansion. As far as Lenny's concerned, the only good Wolverine is a shaved Wolverine.



## 4 HULK

Boy, that Hulk sure can hit them high notes! Belts out quite a tune. Puts Fiona Apple to shame. Anyhoo, Hulkie's so damn big (literally and figuratively) these days that there's no way one puny title can contain massive Hulk! So Hulk smash into second title! Yep, starting in June, *The Rampaging Hulk*, a new monthly featuring the good ol' "Hulk Smash" bouncing-'round-the-Southwest-being-chased-by-Thunderbolt-Ross torn-up-purple-pants Hulk hits shelves. Why? 'Cause hot-dammit, there's still a call for savage brutality in comics today and no one belts *that* out like the Hulk!

## 5 DEADPOOL

Hey, now *there's* some nice, protective headgear! Memo to the NFL: Get rid of those helmets, stock up on turtles! Looks like Deadpool, Merry Marvel's Motor-Mouthed Mercenary, adds another crime to his rap sheet: cruelty to animals. Not that it'll really hurt him any. Fans love the smart-ass attitude Deadpool sports and the hilarious hijinks found in his book. Where else can you see the Great Lakes Avengers (now the Lightningrods), Deuce the Dare-Hound and willful mistreatment of reptiles? Only one place, baby: *Deadpool*.

## 6 THE DARKNESS

If meanness were cheese, Jackie Estacado, Darkness boy, would be up to his armpits in cheddar. He's the President of the Nasty-Ass Sumbitch Club. Not only is he a mob hitman, but he's also the possessor of The Darkness, which, as the name implies, ain't exactly the most benevolent of superpowers. With his guns and his funky mystic Darkness hoodoo, Estacado can bust up his enemies double-time. Which makes ya wonder why he's so durned popular. It's simple, really: Everyone loves a bad boy.

## 7 BATMAN

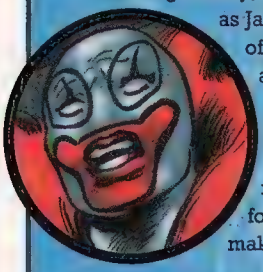
Batman would hang upside-down to be on this list! Hey, he *is* hanging upside-down! He also said he'd give us anything we wanted if he could just be on this list, including the Batmobile, a copy of *Detective Comics* #400 (With Neal Adams art!), a 20 percent interest in Wayne Enterprises and what he termed some "art photos" that Alfred had to pose for when he was poor and in college. What a deal!

## 8 IRON MAN

Okay, the Iron Man armor is cool and all, but can it get you chicks? We doubt it. The faceplate is expressionless, never allowing you to make goo-goo eyes at the girlies. Plus, it's hard to strike those *GQ*-model casual-cool poses when your joints are armored up. And "little" Iron Man? He's completely hidden behind a shell of tempered steel. So the armor ain't exactly a chick magnet. But three tons of firepower, repulsor rays and boot jets make for a whole different kinda fun.

## 9 JACK-IN-THE-BOX

*Astro City* climbs the charts every month and city visitors seem to go for one hero more than any other—the happy-go-lucky, crazy-cool technical genius known as Jack-in-the-Box. And he's pulling off a minor miracle: He's making a clown (A *clown*!) seem cool! That eerie clown makeup getup can scare the hell out of bad guys and *still* delight the masses at the same time. Not bad for a guy who looks like he should be making balloon animals, huh?



## 10 SUPERMAN

It's about damn time. We've endured Dead Superman, Four Lame-ass Imitation Supermen, Long-haired Superman, I'm-engaged-but-we're-breaking-it-off-ooops!-we're getting-married Superman, Electric Blue Superman, Red Superman and Blue Superman, and now we're finally back where we started: Just Plain Classic Superman. Glory, hallelujah! The release of *Superman Forever* brings back Big Blue the way fans have always loved him and we hope the "Forever" part is a *promise* and not just a title. At least until Nick Cage's "Superman" hits.

# MORT OF THE MONTH

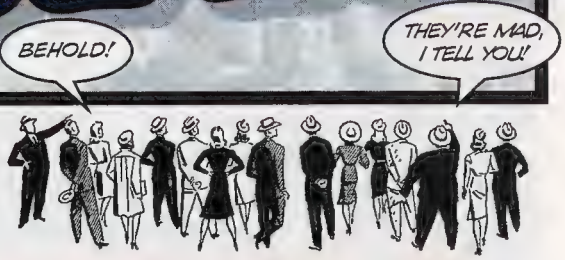
ONE LAME-ASS CHARACTER

## SHAGGY MAN

Zoinks! Break out the Scooby Snacks! Shaggy Man's in the house! Imagine what this thing would smell like if it got wet. Pee-yew! Anyhoo, this walking-carpet Bigfoot knockoff is the synthetic "plastalloy" creation of Professor Andrew Zagarain, your typical dumb-as-a-rock DC mad scientist of the '60s. Zagarain made Shaggy Man (Very creative name choice, Doc.) out of plastalloy and charged him up with electricity (Didn't we see this in "Frankenstein"?), creating a *yawn* mindless brute that attacked anything that moved, except, unfortunately, the Doc. Then the Justice League showed up and kicked its furry ass.

**MORTOMETER**

# picks




## THE MUST-READ COMICS SHIPPING IN MAY

## book of the month

### MAJOR BUMMER #12

**DC COMICS** This is what we know about *Major Bummer* #12: The story serves as a prequel of sorts to last month's *Major Bummer* #11. And something really bad happens to the super-disinterested Lou Martin. By Arcudi, Doug Mahnke and Tom Nguyen. Arcudi says, "Issue #11, Lou gets killed. Issue #12, he gets killed again. And then he takes care of business. And actually, [the alien] Zinnac—except it's not the Zinnac you know and love—is responsible for all the mayhem." $2.50

### ACME NOVELTY LIBRARY #10

**FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS** X-Ray Goggles! Exploding Gum! Itching Powder! Atomic-Powered Submarines! Joy Buzzers! Whoopee Cushions! Pinch us, we must be dreaming! Take a trip back in comic book history with this 24-page collection of simulated ads for every piece of *kitsch* that ever saw print in a funnybook. And heck, if that ain't enough, there's also 24 pages of reprinted stories from *Blab!* #7-#8, detailing the island adventures of hero Jimmy Corrigan. Woo-hoo! By Chris Ware. **$4.95**

### AQUAMAN #46

**DC COMICS** Aquamania is running wild! The undisputed, hook-handed King of Atlantis (read: Aquaman) is set to brawl against...his younger (and shaved) self? Well, that's what it seems, and not only is this young upstart looking to challenge the older Aquaman's claim to the throne, he's also bearing news of the older Aquaman's ex-wife Mera. By Peter David, Jim Calafiore and P.L. Palmiotti. **$1.95**

### ASTRO CITY #15

**HOMAGE/IMAGE** Someone's killing supervillains in Astro City. Fresh from jail, the stainless-steel super-felon Steeljack searches for the killer. Why? Well, maybe he doesn't wanna be the next super-corpse, or maybe he's just seeking redemption. Regardless, how subtle can a metal man be when investigating a high-profile murder case? Two words: not very. By Kurt Busiek, Brent Anderson and Will Blyberg. **$2.50**

### THE AVENGERS #6

**MARVEL** In the history of frauds, there are a few standouts: The Loch Ness Monster, the Hitler diaries, Milli Vanilli. And now we've got another: The Avengers—at least according to the Squadron Supreme. To prove they're the real deal, the Avengers confront the Squadron at Project Pegasus' headquarters, which means, basically, flying fists and hurt feelings. By Kurt Busiek, George Pérez and Al Vey. **$1.99**

### BATTLE CHASERS #2

**CLIFFHANGER/IMAGE** Young Gully has her father's eyes. And now, she inherits something else from the old man—a pair of powerful magic gauntlets. So dig it, Gully's got the mind and body of a 9-year-old girl, but with the strength of Hercules. Hmm...maybe she should hook up



MR TITLES DENOTED WITH AN MR CONTAIN MATERIAL THAT'S SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS.

with Bamm Bamm from "The Flintstones." He's gotta be available by now. By Joe Madureira, Munier Sharrieff and Tom McWeeney. **$2.50**

## BOX OFFICE POISON #9

**ANTARCTIC PRESS** You know, even though this comic's a heckuva lot of fun to read, rarely does it have anything to do with boxes, offices or even poison. Anyway, the ice is thin and the tension is thick when twenty-somethings Janet and James go ice skating—and the heavy-drinking Dorothy steps into the limelight. By Alex Robinson, who says, "Janet is cheating on her husband with another character, James. But my main reason for doing this issue is that the main character, Dorothy, is the least-favorite character in the book, according to a poll I took. So I decided to do a whole issue mostly focusing on her—to piss people off." **MR $2.95**

## BRING BACK THE BAD GUYS

**MARVEL** Come to the dark side, as Marvel reprints the origin stories of some of the company's greatest crimelords, evil masterminds and all-around bad-asses. Witness the birth of trashheaps like Magneto, Galactus, Kingpin, Mandarin and Kang, and thrill to their battles with Marvel's heroes. Besides some contemporary tales starring these vile cretins, each story is prefaced with an introduction by Stan Lee. And remember, good is dumb. By Lee, Steve Ditko, Chris Claremont, John Byrne and others. **$24.99**

## CAPTAIN AMERICA #7

**MARVEL** Where are the Men in Black when you need 'em? Shapeshifting alien Skrulls are running amok through America, causing widespread panic. And while Captain America's helpless to stop the onslaught, maybe, just maybe, the Avengers and Fantastic Four can make the Skrulls wish they invaded France instead. By Mark Waid, Dale Eaglesham, Andy Kubert and Jesse Delperdang. **$1.99**

ASTRO CITY #15

## CASTLE WAITING #6

**OLIO** Ever wonder what happens *after* your favorite fairy tale ends "happily ever after"? Well, that's just what this intriguing comic tackles. In this ish, Castle Waiting denizens Rackham Adjutant (he's a talking stork) and Sir Chess head out for an evening of refined conversation and high culture. For the unenlightened, this means the guys are gonna booze it up and chase women. By Linda Medley. **$2.95**

GREEN LANTERN #100

## FANTASTIC FOUR #7

**MARVEL** Little Franklin Richards is a popular kid. Not only is he well-liked (And pretty damn powerful!), but he's also wanted by the alien mercenary group the Technet. When they get what they want, the Fantastic Four's nowhere nearby, and it's up to Franklin's protector (Reed Richards' old friend Alyssa Moi) to alert the team before Franklin goes bye-bye for good. By Chris Claremont, Salvador Larroca and Art Thibert. **$1.99**

## THE FLASH #139

**DC COMICS** "Black Flash," Part 1 (of 3). Bein' the Flash's girlfriend has gotta suck. Y'see, this starts as a day of great joy, as Wally West seems poised to propose to his longtime gal pal Linda Park. But as Flash's super-speedster friends gather to celebrate, hero Max Mercury realizes that Flash is destined to die on this fateful day. Seems the Weather Wizard, who's stirring up trouble in Africa, is just itching to make the World's Fastest Man the World's Stiffest Corpse. By Mark Millar, Pop Mhan and Chris Ivy. **$1.95**

## GREEN LANTERN #100

**DC COMICS** Celebrate this milestone 100th issue by adding Green Lantern Hal Jordan to the long list of dead

heroes who just won't stay buried. Current GL Kyle Rayner is tossed back to the past, where he teams with Jordan—and the Green Lantern Corps—to battle the devilish Sinestro. And when Jordan tries to send Rayner back to the present, something goes wronger than that straight-to-video "Captain America" film. By Ron Marz, Darryl Banks and Terry Austin. "I think this is a little different from a lot of anniversary issues," says Marz, "in that this is actually the start of a big storyline, rather than the conclusion of one. Issue #100 is a stand-alone story, but it

leads into the next six issues, which we're collectively calling 'Emerald Knight.'" **COLLECTOR'S EDITION—$2.95; STANDARD EDITION—$2.95**

## HEPCATS #11-#12

**ANTARCTIC PRESS** Yowza! Talk about your heart-wrenching, emotional roller coasters! Lying in a coma, Erica dreams of her tortured childhood. In the most troubling year, 1983, something bad happened. Something VERY bad. Seems Erica's old man decided to kill himself, and he tried bringing his whole family along for the ride. Learn Erica and her family's final fate in this truly gripping tale. By Martin Wagner. **MR $2.95 EACH**

## IRON MAN #6

**MARVEL** Scientists are disappearing from the Marvel Universe like donuts from a fat farm. So Russian spy Black Widow sets up a sting operation, with Tony Stark for bait! The good news is the kidnappers try to grab Stark. The really good news (for the villains, of course) is Stark's gonna have a reeeaal hard time getting to his Iron Man armor. And behind it all, a shadowy figure lurks in the background. By Kurt Busiek, Patrick Zircher, Eric J. Cannon and Sean Parsons. **$1.99**

## JLA #20

**DC COMICS** The Justice League members are captured by an alien race and put into bondage, where they're made to wear leather masks and...whoops! Wrong kind of bondage. Anyway, their overseer is the normally benign superpowered Adam Strange. But even the return of the traditional red-and-blue Superman may not be enough to save 'em. By Mark Waid, Arnie Jorgensen and Dave Meikis. **$1.95**

## JLA YEAR ONE #7 (OF 12)

**DC COMICS** Growing pains hit the fledgling JLA like a runaway freight train. Tensions are strained when Superman saves Green Lantern from the less-than-savory Weapon Master, the Black Canary and Flash are mere minutes away from renting a room in a hotel that charges by the hour—if you catch our drift—and a loose end from the JLA's brief past comes back to haunt them. By Mark Waid, Brian Augustyn, Barry Kitson and Mark Blair. **$1.95**

## NIGHTWING #22

**DC COMICS** Blüdhaven's newest hero Nite-Wing is the most sterling example of bravery and determination—at least in the entire intensive care wing. Evildoers Lady Vic and other assorted scum are out to pull the plug on 'Wing, and our helpless hero's only hope is the one, true-blue Nightwing. By Chuck Dixon, Scott McDaniel and Karl Story. **$1.95**

## POISON ELVES #35

**SIRIUS** Slaughter-minded assassin elf Lusipher is menaced by his nemesis the Purple Marauder (Funny thing: *Our* nemesis is a purple marauder, too. We call him Barney.). And while the Marauder's skulking about, Lusipher's all set to face off with his most hated, and decidedly misogynistic, foe. By Drew Hayes. **$2.50**

## PREACHER #39

**VERTIGO/DC COMICS** Someone—or something—crawls out of the nuclear-irradiated desert in Monument Valley, Utah. Yup, folks are still digging out from "War in the Sun," where the evil Starr ordered a nuclear bomb strike. The whole sordid event has left Custer's girlfriend Tulip O'Hare, Cassidy the vampire and Starr with psychological scars that probably won't heal for at least two whole issues. By Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. **MR $2.50**

## QUANTUM AND WOODY #16

**ACCLAIM** "Magnum Force," Part 3 (of 4). You know what Quantum and Woody need? They need some superpowers, and maybe some weapons that'll work against the titanic force that is War Locke. Barring that, maybe they'll need the name of a good mortician. Yikes! By Christopher Priest, MD Bright and Greg Adams. **$2.50**

## ROBIN #55

**DC COMICS** "Brotherhood of the Fist," Part 3 (of 5). Here's a hint for you would-be comic writers—everything sounds menacing when prefaced by "Brotherhood of the..." Go ahead, try it! Anyway, young turks Robin and Green Arrow battle the Brotherhood of the Monkey cult's assassins. And these particular guys seem even more bloodthirsty than the killers Batman and Arrow fought

earlier in this crossover. By Chuck Dixon, Will Rosado and Stan Woch. **$1.95**

## SAVAGE DRAGON #49

**IMAGE** "Unfinished Business," Part 2 (of 3). Sweet home Chicago has become a warzone. The Savage Dragon is out to destroy the Vicious Circle gang, but somewhere between here and there, he's pitted against a gorilla with a see-through cranium. Ain't that always the way? At least he might get to utter those immortal words, "Take your stinking paws off me, you damn dirty ape!" By Erik Larsen. **$2.50**

## STORMWATCH #7

**WILDSTORM/IMAGE** "Bleed," Part 1 (of 3). Comic book law #27: *No scientific experiment shall ever be conducted unless the researcher is sure it will go horribly awry.* When a StormWatch scientific experiment goes horribly awry, a window is opened to another dimension, where another Weatherman is leading another StormWatch. And this second Weatherman seems to be a pretty evil dude. Oops. By Warren Ellis, Bryan Hitch and Paul Neary. **$2.50**

## STRANGERS IN PARADISE #15

**ABSTRACT STUDIO** "High School," Part 3 (of 3). On Francine Peters' sweet 17th birthday, a wet blanket the size of New Jersey is dropped on the festivities. First, something really terrible happens to Francine's friend Katchoo, something that causes her to run away from home. Then, as if that wasn't enough, well-minded adults step in to ruin Francine's birthday party. By Terry Moore. Also, check out the *Strangers in Paradise Volume 5: Immortal Enemies* trade paperback, which reprints issues #6-#12 and tells of Katchoo's flight to Los Angeles and a very shocking death. ***STRANGERS IN PARADISE* #15—$2.75; *STRANGERS IN PARADISE VOLUME 5: IMMORTAL ENEMIES*—$14.95**

SAVAGE DRAGON #49

# newreleases

FIRST TIME OUT

**CRIMSON #1** **(Cliffhanger/Image)** Youngster/vampire Alex Elder is switching to an all-blood diet. See what life in New York will do to you? **$2.50**

**THE DREAMING: TRIAL AND ERROR** **(Vertigo/DC Comics)** Hear ye, hear ye. The court will now hear the case of the state versus Cain for the repeated murders of his brother Abel. **MR $5.95**

**GIRLFRENZY! BOOKS** **(DC Comics)** It's a wild week of women as DC publishes seven special one-shots spotlighting its familiar females (such as *Birds of Prey*'s Black Canary and Oracle) and brand-new characters (including The Secret). They are: *Batman: Batgirl* #1; *Birds of Prey: The Ravens* #1; *JLA: Tomorrow Woman* #1; *Starman: The Mist* #1; *Superman: Lois Lane* #1; *Wonder Woman: Donna Troy* #1; *Young Justice: The Secret* #1 **$1.95 each**

JLA: TOMORROW WOMAN #1

**GREEN LANTERN ANNUAL #1** **(1963) (DC Comics)** This 80-page behemoth reprints the first appearance of the evil Sinestro and other classic *GL* tales. **$4.95**

**GREEN LANTERN SECRET FILES #1** **(DC Comics)** Learn about the men who were offered the Green Lantern ring before Kyle Rayner got his mitts on it—and more. **$4.95**

**HARDCORE STATION #1** **(DC Comics)** Chief Max rules the deep-space outpost Hardcore Station with an iron fist. Until, that is, the destructive Synnar comes a-calling. **$2.50**

**IRON FIST #1** **(Marvel)** Is someone holding Iron Fist's sister hostage? And isn't she dead? The Fist is gonna have to jump through some serious hoops to find out. **$2.50**

**JLA 80-PAGE GIANT #1** **(DC Comics)** Villains react to the new JLA lineup, Booster Gold and Blue Beetle reunite, and five other spiffy stories of the Justice League past and present are played out in 80 funky pages. **$4.95**

**MARVEL ANNUAL '98 STARRING: DEADPOOL & DEATH** **(Marvel)** Unravel Deadpool's Weapon X connections, while comics' goofiest merc buys the farm on page 4! **$2.99**

**MARVEL ANNUAL '98 STARRING: THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN & DEVIL DINOSAUR** **(Marvel)** Devil Dinosaur's the star attraction in the evil Ringmaster's Circus of Crime—until it goes on a rampage. **$2.99**

**SPIDER-MAN: MADE MEN** **(Marvel)** As ganglords fight for control of New York City, Spider-Man and Daredevil are caught in the bloody crossfire. **$5.99**

**SPIRIT OF THE TAO #1** **(Top Cow/Image)** College students Lance and Jasmine are descendants of the Tao, an ancient, deadly force, and have to decide what they're gonna do with it. **$2.50**

**TRIPLE DARE #1** **(Alternative Press)** Independent creators Tom Hart, James Kochalka and Jon Lewis join forces to tell 10-page tales, each interrelated by characters, themes or plots. **$2.95**

**VAMPIRELLA/PAINKILLER JANE #1** **(Harris)** The fur's gonna fly when Vampi and Painkiller Jane get into the catfight of the century. Mrrrowww! **$3.50**

## THOR #1

**MARVEL** Bring yon lasses and fetch a flagon of mead! The celebration begins anew, as the Mighty Thor returns to the Marvel Universe and the realm of Midgard (Earth). Verily, on the realm of Midgard, the base villain Destroyer thirsts for the destruction of New York, and Thor's godly hands will indeed be full. Not only will our hero have to defeat a foe that not even the Avengers can stop, he'll also have to deal with a new, human civilian identity. Zounds and forsooth! By Dan Jurgens, John Romita Jr. and Klaus Janson. Jurgens says, "Despite the fact that Thor has been around a good, long time, this is the first #1 issue Thor has ever had—and I think that's absolutely remarkable. It really is the beginning of what will be a new status quo and a new paradigm for Thor." **$2.99**

## 300 #1 (OF 5)

**DARK HORSE** Make a stand with the ancient Spartans at Thermopylae, as they battle *mano a mano* with the Persian army. All of Greece hangs in the balance, but the Spartans only have 300 soldiers, and the Persian army, led by King Xerxes, is the most destructive fighting force on the planet. And hey, this stuff really happened, so if you're not careful, you can actually learn stuff. By Frank Miller and Lynn Varley. Miller says, "This is a really gripping, frightening story. *Classics Illustrated*, this is not. It takes place at the very early beginnings of civilization and, quite literally, everything we are is on the line when the story takes place—you couldn't even publish your magazine had there not been those 300 men at the Hot Gates [the English translation of Thermopylae]." **MR $2.95**

## THUNDERBOLTS #16

**MARVEL** How low do you have to sink to fight the Great Lakes Avengers? The former Masters of Evil (now turned

# alsoshipping

MORE BOOKS TO GET

**ALPHA FLIGHT #12** **(Marvel)** Death hits Alpha Flight. 'Nuff said. **$2.99**

**BATMAN BOOKS** **(DC Comics)** People are still buried in the ruins of Gotham and Batman's got to rescue them in *Batman* #556. Over in *Detective Comics* #723, Green Arrow and the Dark Knight beeline to Gotham to save Nightwing and Robin from the *snicker* Brotherhood of the Monkey. **$1.95 EACH**

**THE DARKNESS #15** **(Top Cow/Image)** Meet Magdalena and her Spear of Destiny. You already know her target, the Darkness-wielding assassin Jackie Estacado. **$2.50**

**DEADPOOL #18** **(Marvel)** Ajax cleans! He also kills. But now this Deadpool-hunting freak is being hunted by the 'Pool. **$1.99**

**GEN13 BOOKS** **(WildStorm/Image)** Grunge gives birth (sort of) to an evil monster in *Gen13* #29, while *Gen12* #4 sees Special Agent Morgan continue his investigation of Project Genesis. **$2.50**

**INCREDIBLE HULK #466** **(Marvel)** Even a green hulking brute can cry when the loss is big enough. And, well, this issue, the Hulk suffers a terrible loss. **$1.99**

**LADY DEATH #5** **(Chaos!)** With all of Hell and some of Heaven out for her skin, Lady Death's in a real tight spot. She's also powerless. And mortal. **$2.95**

**SPAWN #74** **(Todd McFarlane Productions)** Something beyond Heaven and Hell ("Spice World 2"?) is coming, let loose by Spawn's battle with the Heap. **$1.95**

**SPIDER-MAN BOOKS** **(Marvel)** Spider-Man returns to his old costume and name, only to be thrown into a battle between his ex-girlfriend the Black Cat and the evil Arcade in *Sensational Spider-Man* #29. In *Amazing Spider-Man* #436, Spidey fights the Black Tarantula, while a new Ghost Rider runs through sinners like a hot knife through flesh in *Peter Parker* #93. Lastly, the Hobgoblin rears his goblin-esque mug in *Spectacular Spider-Man* #259. **$1.99 each**

**STAR WARS BOOKS** **(Dark Horse Comics)** Guri the assassin droid undergoes a humanizing operation in *Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire–Evolution* #4, and the last two Crimson Guardsmen fight to the death in *Star Wars: Crimson Empire* #6. Then Princess Leia and Wedge Antilles negotiate with the new Emperor in *Star Wars: X-Wing Rogue Squadron–Masquerade* #30. **$2.95 each**

**SUPERMAN BOOKS** **(DC Comics)** There's a new Superman in town. Thankfully, this guy has the good sense to exist in the year 2999. Meet him in *Superman* #136, while in *Adventures of Superman* #559, the Silver Age shenanigans continue with Metallo and Brainiac. In yet another '70s-style story, the Man of Steel fights the Prankster in *Action Comics* #746, and finally, flash back to 1938 with a Golden Age Superman fighting those damned, evil Ratzis in *Superman: The Man of Steel* #81. **$1.95 each**

**TALES OF THE DARKNESS #2** **(Top Cow/Image)** This story's Darkness-wielder can travel in space, where there's not a drop of light to be had. **$2.95**

**WITCHBLADE #23** **(Top Cow/Image)** Scumbag Ian Nottingham's got the Witchblade, and former owner Sara Pezzini ain't sure she wants to stop him. **$2.50**

**WOLVERINE #126** **(Marvel)** Wolverine fights Sabretooth. Again. Expect a lot of biting. **$1.99**

good guys and calling themselves The Thunderbolts) find out when they tussle with these third-rate heroes. Now calling themselves the Lightningrods, the GLAers want to bring the 'Bolts to justice—and they've got S.H.I.E.L.D. backing them up. By Kurt Busiek, Mark Bagley and Scott Hanna. Busiek says, "Joe Kelly over in *Deadpool* established that they dropped the 'Great Lakes Avengers' name and picked up the Lightningrods name as a way of hitching their wagon to the Thunderbolts' star. So we figured that once the Thunderbolts were exposed as villains, that leaves the Lightningrods with egg on their face. So they're going to be pretty pissed off." **$1.99**

## TRANSMETROPOLITAN #11

**HELIX/DC COMICS** "Freeze Me with Your Kiss," Part 2 (of 3). Hell hath no fury like a canine fixed. The evil dog Stompanato is set on taking a bite—and then some—out of the hide of rogue reporter Spider Jerusalem. And Spider's got nary a place to hide from the mutt. Y'see, he's been evicted and all his money's just plain gone. By Warren Ellis, Darick Robertson and Rodney Ramos. **MR $2.50**

## UNCANNY X-MEN #357

**MARVEL** To "empower" herself, X-Woman Jean Grey has taken the name and costume of the original Phoenix. So what's wrong with that? Oh, just the fact that she's adopted the identity of a being that killed billions of people. On top of that, while vacationing in Alaska, Grey and her hubby Cyclops uncover a strange magical power that may change their lives forever. By Steven T. Seagle, Dan Norton and Tim Townsend. **$1.99**

## X-MEN #77

**MARVEL** Storm and Wolverine travel to deepest, darkest Africa, meet the Black Panther and fight a tribe of Zulu ninjas. Meanwhile, over in America, Psylocke gets in touch with her evil side and has a run-in with Maggott. By Joe Kelly, German Garcia and Art Thibert. "One by one, the X-Men get knocked off," Kelly says, "and we learn Ananasi [the trickster god] has a secret agenda, which leads to an event at the end that actually has some impact on the rest of the Marvel Universe—if everybody got the memo and remembers to put it in, that is." **$1.99**

THUNDERBOLTS #16

# on the edge

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

## HAIRY MARY

**SLAB-O-CONCRETE**

If hundreds of UFOs suddenly came down from the heavens and aliens replaced our brains with sawdust and made us dance bare-assed with Richard Nixon's corpse, it might be less fantastical than this 64-page comic book. Manga-esque heroine Hairy Mary is pixie-cute and spunky like a monkey; not to mention she's got really big (and mighty morphing) hair! Mary gets into all sorts of brain-shrinking adventures that include a gorilla named Camilla, a cake most hideous, a robot that's had a sex change, everybody's favorite thing in the whole wide world (pie, of course) and other really strange stuff. This book comes with a bonus "postcard-format comic." By Craig Conlan. **$8.50**

## YOUNG HEROES IN LOVE #14

**DC COMICS** While the rest of the Young Heroes do whatever it is young heroes in love do when not superheroin', the miniscule hero Junior hunts down the sinister kidnapper Birthday Boy—all by his tiny, lonesome self. Plus, the Young Heroes get their own comic book! By Dandy Dan Raspler, Dandy Dev Madan and...um...Dandy Keith Champagne. **$1.95**

## YOUNGBLOOD #4

**AWESOME** Youngblood only *sounds* like the name of a really bad porno tape. In reality, it's the name of a nifty li'l superhero team—a team with members like Shaft, Johnny Panic, Twilight, Doc Rocket, Big Brother and Suprema. In this ish, Team Youngblood travels back in time to the Old West, where they'll most certainly have no trouble with the villains of the day. But when Awesome's Wild West heroes jump to the present and fight today's upwardly mobile, high-tech super-scum, it's gonna be like Pauly Shore vs. Mike Tyson. By Alan Moore, Steve Skroce and Lary Stucker. **$2.50**

# REPORT card

COMIC BOOK REVIEWS

BY *WIZARD* EDITORS BRIAN CUNNINGHAM, ANDREW KARDON, GREG ORLANDO AND MIKE SEARLE

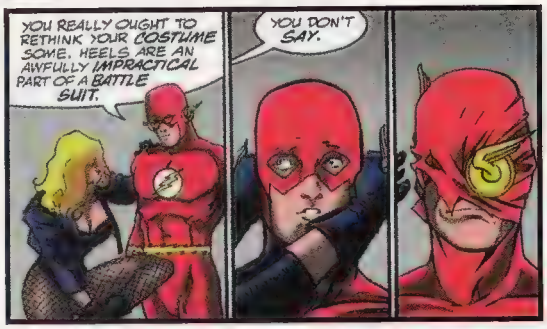
## JLA: YEAR ONE

### Leagues above the rest

**ISSUES REVIEWED:** #1–#5
**GENRE:** Superhero action/adventure
**Publisher:** DC Comics
**CREATIVE TEAM:** Mark Waid, Brian Augustyn, Barry Kitson and Michael Bair
**PRICE/FREQUENCY:** $2.95/Monthly

**What You Need to Know:** Set 10 years ago, this is the Justice League of America in its earliest days. Struggling to find their own identities, Aquaman, Black Canary, Flash, Green Lantern and Martian Manhunter unite to fight a common foe and form DC's greatest team.

**The Good:** Perfect in its execution, *JLA: Year One* kicks serious butt! The flawless characterization of the five original Leaguers is taken to a new level. Green Lantern, for example, is the cocksure, smart-aleck who loves to steal the show. In issue #2, with the rest of the League members floundering in their first press conference, GL steps in, steals the mike and saves the day. Flash's the reserved, well-meaning hero who's so quick and efficient at his civilian job that everyone thinks he's a slacker. Black Canary, in a new twist, is presented as a "roadie" with a fawning love for superhero history, particularly dealing with JLA's predecessor, the Justice Society of America. The awkward-mannered Aquaman and the detached Martian Manhunter are the quintessential outcasts. Amazingly enough, we feel like we know these characters better now than we ever did before.




The details in this series are superb. Aquaman is constantly mumbling 'cause he's so used to talking underwater where sound travels better. In issue #2, Flash and GL sign a sea of autographs in seconds, Flash at super-speed, GL with multiple power-ring hands. In issue #4, between the ding and dong of a doorbell, Flash sets the dinner table and makes supper just before his fiancée walks in the door. Enhanced by the smooth, expressive artwork, it's details like these that make these characters seem real.

Who would have imagined that 40 years after the Justice League of America was first introduced, a series would come along that takes a new look at these old characters?

**The Bad:** This series is coming a decade too late. It's a shame that writers like Mark Waid and Brian Augustyn weren't there to write *Flash* and *Green Lantern* back then and keep great characters like Barry Allen and Hal Jordan from becoming casualties of fan apathy. *JLA: Year One* shows how much life these guys can have—and they've been dead for years.

**The Buzz:** With a direct tie-in to DC's top 10 title, *JLA*, and backed by Waid's star power, this book is selling gangbusters. And it deserves every penny.

**The Skinny:** *JLA: Year One* is what we want to see in a super-team title. If there was any justice in the world, this *League* would be more than a mini-series.■

*"Old" characters, our ass!* JLA: Year One*'s heroes are fun and have more life than most current heroes.*

*Aquaman's learning English is but one personality touch that makes these characters fascinating.*

**THE GRADE: A+**

# DAREDEVIL
## Not daring enough

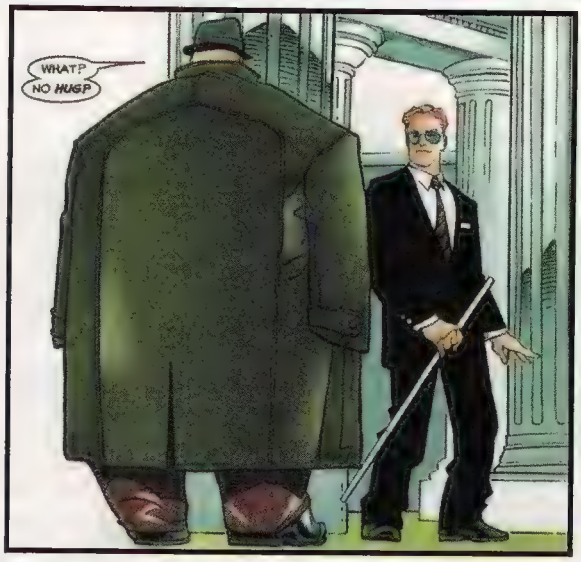
**ISSUES REVIEWED:** #368–#375
**GENRE:** Superhero action/adventure
**PUBLISHER:** Marvel Comics
**CREATIVE TEAM:** Joe Kelly, Gene Colan, Ariel Olivetti and a host of others
**PRICE/FREQUENCY:** $1.99/Monthly

**What You Need to Know:** Struck by radioactive waste, young Matt Murdock was rendered blind, but his other senses, including a strange "radar sense," were heightened to superhuman levels. Murdock became an attorney and uses his superhuman abilities as the superhero Daredevil.

**The Good:** Top-notch characters drive this series. The likable Murdock, with his wry sense of humor and a host of problems, fights crime on an urban scale you can relate to while trying to balance a personal life. Radio star Karen Page, Murdock's girlfriend, comes across as a real woman you can care about. Murdock's law partner Foggy Nelson provides comic relief, while Rosalind Sharpe, Murdock's boss, adds acerbic wit and antagonism into the picture. The heroine Black Widow, Murdock's former lover, sets up an involving love triangle, which is full of uncertainty and tension.

The use of Daredevil's powers is well done. In issue #369, trapped in a prison cell together, Black Widow communicates with DD by tapping her fingers together in Morse Code so their captors can't overhear. Later, Black Widow slips him the jail key with a farewell kiss (#370). In issue #372, DD has to concentrate to interpret his radar sense over the roar of the motorcycle he's riding. All throughout, DD's powers cleverly remind us of his blindness as well. In issue #374, Murdock uses his heightened sense of smell to discover blood in a room, but he has to concentrate to find it.

While maintaining a hip writing style, the book slips in a lot of neat story points, especially in the use of cliffhangers—like when Black Widow pops a cap in DD's chest (#368)—which keep you coming back for more.




**The Bad:** Unfortunately, the inconsistent—and sometimes plain shoddy—artwork is a big turn-off. How can readers be expected to immerse themselves in a story which gives them a different look every other issue? Particularly glaring is the double-sized *Daredevil* #375, which features 11 different artists! Not only is it distracting, but it's downright confusing when an art style switches mid-scene; there are times the characters look completely different!

*Daredevil* desperately needs better plotting. The set-ups are interesting—Black Widow and DD's rekindled romance, a serial killer on the loose, Mr. Fear lurking in the background—but there's no delivery. The plots run out of *oomph* mid-stream and the endings are unsatisfactory. On top of all that, there are BIG holes in the stories—so big, that it seems like we're missing a whole issue between issues #374 and #375. What was the sequence of events leading up to Karen being accused of murder? What happened to the "Triple Threat" serial killer? Why did the Kingpin interfere in the trial? Maybe Marvel published a *Daredevil* #374 1/2 and we missed it somehow. Either way, we're baffled going from one issue to the next.

**The Buzz:** With a relaunch set for September, writer Kevin Smith and artists Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti come aboard *Daredevil* for at least six months (hopefully more). We're thinking these guys aren't blind to the book's current problems and should steer *Daredevil* back on course.

**The Skinny:** Despite a wealth of entertaining characters, inconsistent art and faulty plots make for a less-than-desirable payoff. ■

*Not only is Kingpin out of character in the incomprehensible #375, but why did he interfere in Karen's trial?*

*DD in an algae mask? Stuff like this brings even a superhero down to Earth. Never mind that it's also funny as hell.*

**THE GRADE: C+**

# LOBO

## This comic's a four-letter word

**ISSUES REVIEWED:** #43–#50
**GENRE:** Humorous action/adventure
**PUBLISHER:** DC Comics
**CREATIVE TEAM:** Alan Grant, Carl Critchlow and Mark Propst
**PRICE/FREQUENCY:** $2.25/Monthly

**What You Need to Know:** Lobo is a killer/alien bounty hunter who thrives on death and carnage, spreading his violence and bloodshed throughout the galaxy. Besides having super-strength, he also has an insanely powerful healing factor.

**The Good:** There are some occasional funny moments. Paranoid Jones—who thinks everyone's after him—hires Lobo to kill, well, everybody (issue #45). Paranoid later communicates with a headless-but-still-living Lobo (There's that great healing factor!) via Morse Code on his arm (#46). And in the midst of a restaurant brawl in issue #49, a customer exclaims, "Waiter, there's a *guy* in my soup."

**The Bad:** *Lobo* is an extremely repetitive book. *Lobo* is an extremely repetitive book. Get it? Anyway, if you've read one issue, you've read 'em all. Besides running the same joke into the ground within the same issue—like the Bruce Lee vs. aliens scenarios in #46 or the chicken crossing the road jokes in #47—there's a very clear outline that each issue follows to the "T." Here goes: Lobo's looking for something, accidentally finds trouble, fights in the obligatory carnage-laden massacre, sees the obligatory destruction of Al's restaurant and the overblown ending where practically everyone but Lobo dies. Basically, the only difference between issues is the number on the front cover. To put it simply, this series is just plain tired.

If you love ridiculously over-the-top super-violence with less-than-zero substance, maybe *Lobo*'s for you. (Especially issue #50, where Lobo spends the entire issue massacring every DC superhero on Earth. Even worse, it turns out the whole thing's a dream.) But there are no real stories here, just one big brawl. *Lobo*'s violent to the point of annoyance, just going for the big laugh. Heck, pro wrestling's got more of a story than this title.

On top of all that, it's never even explained just who Lobo is, what exactly his powers are, etc. Even more bizarre, if Lobo's such a bad-ass why does he need to go around taking on bounty hunter jobs, rather than just beating people up and stealing their money? Lobo's a hollow shell of a character that once had some charm as an occasional guest star.

**The Buzz:** Zero. The Main Man's (a.k.a. Lobo) keeping a profile so low that it's amazing he's lasted 50 issues!

**The Skinny:** After what seemed like we were reading the same *Lobo* issue over and over, we were left with just one wish: that this book is served a death only Lobo can dish out. ■

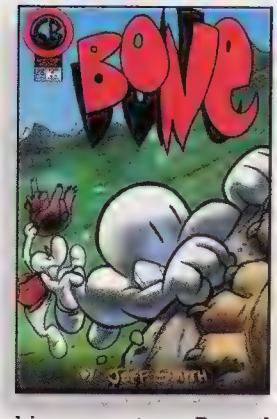
*Uhhh, no, Lobo–it didn't. Every formulaic issue has the obligatory massacre where everybody but Lobo dies. Yawn.*

*Despite some funny moments,* Lobo *is annoyingly violent with no real story.*

**THE GRADE:** F

# BONE

## Bone-afide disappointment




**ISSUES REVIEWED:** #26-#31
**GENRE:** Fantasy action/adventure
**PUBLISHER:** Cartoon Books
**CREATOR:** Jeff Smith
**PRICE/FREQUENCY:** $2.95/Bimonthly

**What You Need to Know:** After being run out of Boneville, three Bone cousins—Fone Bone, Phoney Bone and Smiley Bone—find themselves in a deep-forested valley filled with bizarre creatures. Recently, Fone Bone and Smiley set off to return a friendly Rat Creature cub to its home among the vicious Rat Creatures.

**The Good:** As always, the art is quite expressive. With a few simple lines the art beautifully gets across a whole range of emotions. And the use of shadows works so perfectly that half the time you forget you're reading a black-and-white comic. (Check out issue #30 to see how well a dark cave is lit with a match!)

There's some legitimately funny moments in this title. Issue #30 sees even the clueless Rat Creature cub suffering from Fone Bone's bad poetry recital, while #31 has Smiley looking inside a Rat Creature's mouth to make sure his friends aren't in there.

**The Bad:** Where's the story? Sure, *Bone* is chock full of lighthearted moments, but that's it. Issues #26-#27 contain some intriguing elements with the mystery

surrounding the Dragons and the girl named Thorn, but after that, the series switches gears to Fone Bone and Smiley's adventure with the cub and the mountain cat Roque Ja. What could've been told in one or two issues was stretched out to five! In fact, for the past two years everything in this title have been stretched out and we think we know why. It seems the stories are being written with the sole intent of packaging every five-plus issues into a collected edition. This set-up means that *Bone*'s being prepared for compilations at the expense of the stories. And that's unfortunate.

The current Roque Ja storyline is the only tale being told in #28-#31. What's up with the war that's back at the village which acted as issue #27's cliffhanger? What about the mystery surrounding the dragons, another burning mystery from the last couple story arcs? Cutting to these more interesting interludes would add some much-needed depth to #28-#31.

Issues #26-#31 lack the drama that made this series a great read to begin with; there's no convincing threat of anyone getting seriously hurt or killed, like there was in *Bone*'s first 12 issues or so. And then there's the Rat Creatures, who were intensely scary when they first showed up years ago, but now have become a joke. It's becoming harder to invest in these characters when you don't believe they're in any real danger.

**The Buzz:** May sees the release of the newest hardcover collecting the entire "Roque Ja" saga (issues #28-#32).

**The Skinny:** *Bone* was once the industry's most entertaining comic series. Unfortunately, with the dawn of collecting stories into hardcovers and paperbacks, this title appears to be formatted solely to be repackaged. The result: drawn-out, undramatic stories which left us sorely disappointed.

*...away from the cool plot, that's where! The Roque Ja tale was okay, but not for five issues!*

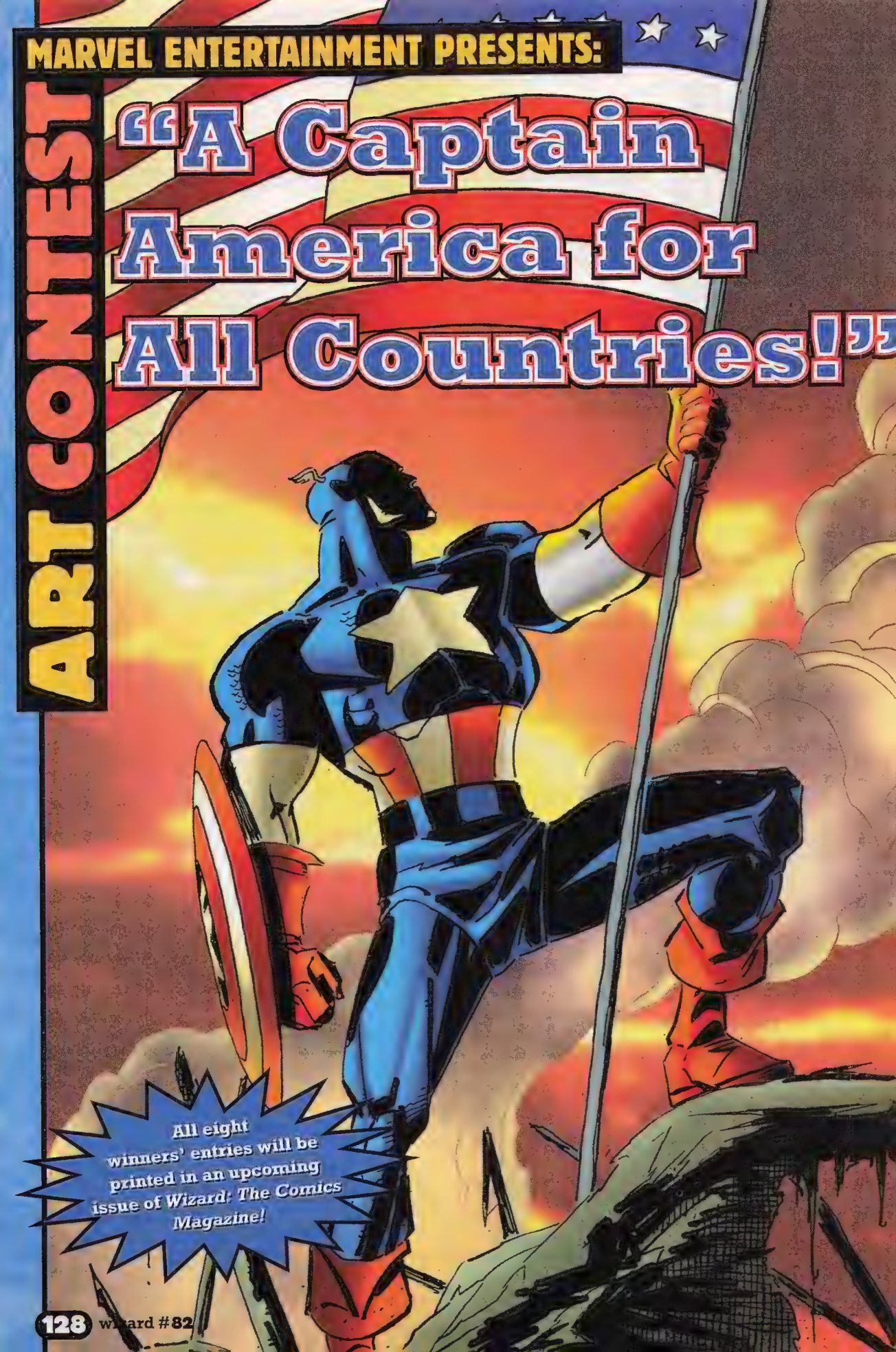
*Thanks to the expressive art,* Bone *can make you laugh (out loud, at times).*

**THE GRADE: C+**

MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS:

ART CONTEST

# "A Captain America for All Countries!"



All eight winners' entries will be printed in an upcoming issue of *Wizard: The Comics Magazine!*

Since 1941, Captain America has defended the good ol' U.S. of A. from the forces of evil. But what about the other countries of the world? They don't have a protector like our Super Soldier. Not until now, that is...

## PRIZES

**GRAND PRIZE (1):** One Super Soldier wins a drawing of his winning entry by Captain America artist extraordinaire Ron Garney. Plus, he'll win Garney-signed copies of *Captain America* (vol. 3) #1-#4, a Garney-signed *Captain America: Man Without a Country* trade paperback, a Cap T-shirt, a Cap poster and a Cap vinyl figure!

**FIRST PRIZE (2):** Each of these two heroes wins a *Captain America* (vol. 3) #1 signed by Ron Garney, a Garney-signed *Man Without a Country* TPB, a Cap T-shirt, a Cap poster and a Cap vinyl figure.

**SECOND PRIZE (5):** Each of these five soldiers walks away with a Cap T-shirt and a cool Cap poster.

**So how d'ya win all that loot?** Draw the Captain as he would look if he was the protector of another country. As you know, Cap's costume features the stars and stripes of the United States of America. So use the flags and national icons of other nations to draw a costume. Here's your opportunity to use those encyclopedias that have been sitting around collecting dust for years—put together a Captain Japan, Captain Ireland, heck, just what would a Captain Trinidad and Tobago look like?

While we'll be looking for entries with the most artistic skill, entries will also be chosen based on originality and humor. Submissions can be on any form of unlined paper or posterboard and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, marker, etc.). Neon inks will not print. The artwork must not be larger than 8" X 11 1/4". Do not fold, bend or roll your artwork; mail it flat.

All contestants must send in two photographs of themselves. Put your name, address, date of birth and phone number on the back of each photo. (No Polaroids, please.)

ENTER NOW!

Fill this out, attach your entry and put it and your photos in an envelope. Send it all to:

**"A Captain America for All Countries!" Art Contest**
**c/o Wizard Entertainment**
**P.O. Box 118**
**Congers, NY 10920-0118**

### SHIELDED TEXT

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, Marvel Entertainment and their immediate families. Contest is sponsored by Wizard Entertainment. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, telephone number with area code and E-mail address on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry, along with two photos of yourself. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "A Captain America for All Countries!" Art Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. What do you get when you cross Cap with the Hulk? A star-spangled Banner! Hahahahaaha..."ahem". **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by June 30, 1998.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries, or entries stolen by the Red Skull. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected based on originality and creativity from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Entertainment. Winning entries will be selected on or about August 14, 1998.

For a list of winners, available after August 14, 1998, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "A Captain America for All Countries!" Art Contest Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

## Captain America Contest Entry Form

**CONTEST DEADLINE June 30, 1998!**

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____ E-mail _____

**DID YOU ATTACH YOUR ENTRY AND PHOTOS?**

IN THE FUTURE, MACHINES WILL NOT BE USER-FRIENDLY.

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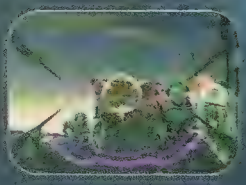
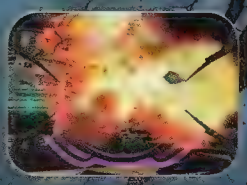
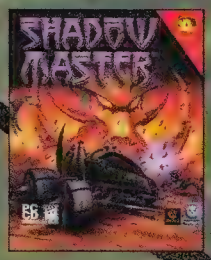







*Immerse yourself in seven unbelievable fantasy worlds and take on a marrauding metallic battalion of mechanized death machines with your weapon-packed, futuristic assault vehicle. The Shadow Master, an evil overlord, has gone completely mad, and he will stop at nothing less than total genocide of anything organic. Through 16 punishing levels, and an endless barrage of spectacular explosive firepower and amazing lighting effects, you must track the Shadow Master down and make scrap metal of him and his lethal robotic creatures.* ***Shadow Master, the ultimate fantasy shooter.***

PSYGNOSIS

3D

PC CD ROM

TEEN T AGES 13+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PlayStation

# A DIRTY PAIR BEATS EVERYTHING

## Yuri and Kei are the undisputed dames of demolition

Follow the path of unbridled destruction and, most likely, it will lead back to Yuri and Kei, two beauties with a mind for mayhem and bodies for...Hey!

These two futuristic bikini-clad sexpots are manga sensations in Japan, and have made the jump to American shores quite nicely. Together, "trouble consultants" Yuri and Kei form the heroic Dirty Pair and, in the course of their varied "missions," the Pair usually blows up everything in sight, but always comes out smelling like roses.

As with most of their manga kin, Yuri and Kei are buxom and curvaceous. They dress like Vegas showgirls and smile like *Playboy* playmates. But don't be fooled by their sub-skimpy uniforms. The Pair's American writer and artist Adam Warren says, "I want to state for the record: 'Dirty' refers to their tendency to wreak havoc, as in 'Dirty Harry,' not to any salacious tendencies on their part."

Before coming to America, Yuri and Kei were created by Japanese science fiction author Haruka Takachiho and manga artist/animator Yoshikazu Yasuhiko (*The Venus Wars*), as stars of illustrated novels. Here, the Dirty Pair's original concept was given shape—the adventures starred the two trouble consultants for the interstellar "World's Welfare Work Association" (or "WWWA"), whose "solutions" always led to heavy collateral damage, yet were never officially found to be their fault.

By 1988, the Pair had caught the eye of Toren Smith and Adam Warren, who licensed the American comic rights as one of the first projects of Studio Proteus. Over the past decade, there has been a total of five American-released Dirty Pair mini-series; Warren has co-written and drawn every one (sharing writing duties on the first three with Smith).

How has the American edition of *Dirty Pair* differed from Takachiho's original? It hasn't, really. It's full of darkly sarcastic humor, but Takachiho's basic premise—two sexy girls with a license to commit mass murder in the line of duty—is pretty damn cynical in and of itself. Funny, too. And if Warren sprays his manga with American pop-culture buckshot, it's fair; Takachiho founded his Pair in Japanese in-jokes: "WWWA" is also the name of Japan's "Women's World Wrestling Association," which once featured a glamorous tag-team called the "Beauty Pair" who competed in silver, two-piece Danskins.

If Warren had his way, the Pair would bump head-on with an American icon. These ladies came very close to engaging in some massive destruction with DC's iconic Man of Steel. Alas, though, a Warren-penned Superman/Dirty Pair crossover may never get past the design stage. "It's a natural," says Warren. "They cause disasters, he stops disasters!"

Sighing, he adds, "It's up in the air; the project was

**TWO PAIR!** Two guns and the bloody card—it looks like heroines Kei (left) and Yuri have a full house.

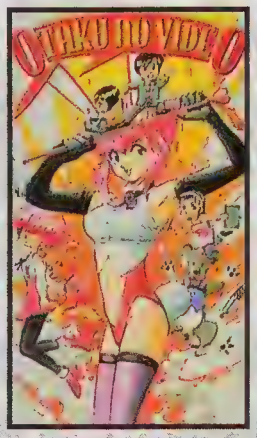
BY CARL GUSTAV HORN

# ANIMEPICK

ANIME FILM OF THE MONTH

## OTAKU NO VIDEO

(AnimEigo, 100 minutes, $39.95 subtitled)




Sometimes described as the "This is Spinal Tap" of anime, "Otaku No Video" is an allegorical, in-joke-packed "mock-umentary." Half the story is anime, with irresistible character designs by Kenichi Sonoda ("Gunsmith Cats"), detailing how Gainax, the creators of "Neon Genesis Evangelion," rose from mere fanboys ("otaku") in the 1980s, to the top of the industry, only to lose everything and stage a comeback from ground zero. The other half of "Otaku No Video" is a series of ruthless, hilarious live interviews with "real otaku," whose faces and voices are blurred in the style of true-crime stories. As they drop out of school, lose girlfriends, display poor hygiene, shoot trivia and get dissed by drunks while waiting in line overnight for movies, Japan's biggest fans of anime, manga and science fiction nevertheless have a dream that someday the whole world will love cult culture the way they do, as they set out to "otaku-ize the human race." "Otaku No Video" proves that being a true fan is universal, and if you can't see your own face in this oddly poignant comedy, you're not looking hard enough. ■

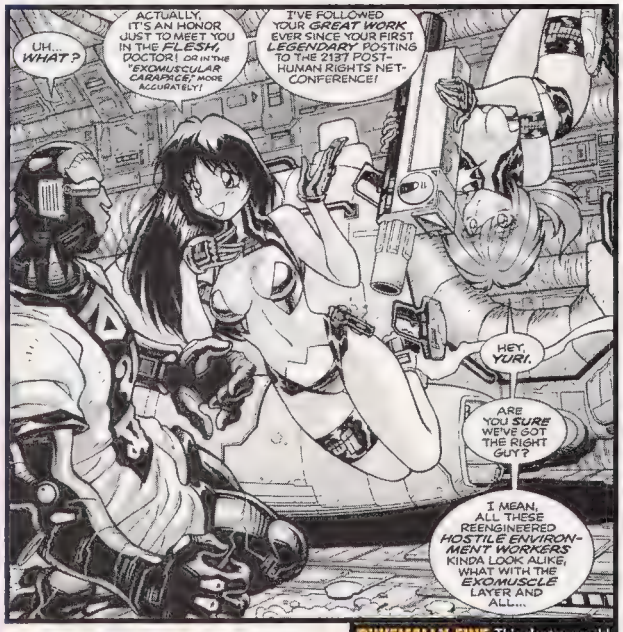
**OTAKU!** Gesundheit! Actually, "Otaku" is Japanese for crazed fanboys, as seen here.

approved, then canceled." He notes it's partially a matter of getting the right budget for the *Photoshop* design work on the epic effects he wants for the story. Here, Warren has something spectacular in mind: The crossover would feature terrifying scenes as the comic's story moves through the atmospheric levels of Jupiter. (As of press time, the status of the crossover is in question.)

"For me, the appeal of Kei and Yuri as characters is their high degree of flexibility," says Warren, who's intrigued by the contrast between the earnest, reserved Yuri and the lackadaisical, impulsive Kei. Warren's Dirty Pair adventures play heavily on this flexibility, and he casts his heroines into increasingly weird situations. In the fourth Dirty Pair series, *Sim Hell*, Warren brought in the idea of a "nanoclysm" of out-of-control micro-machines. In the fifth, *Fatal But Not Serious*, Warren approached the social phenomenon of the characters themselves, with a "Kei 'n' Yuri Con" filled on the inside with those who think the Pair are way cool, and ringed on the outside by enraged mobs shouting, "Don't celebrate genocide!" The event becomes a media circus and, of course, a bloodbath.

The latest Dirty Pair story, *Start the Violence!*, will have Yuri and Kei make a predictably ill-fated attempt to rescue a political prisoner, with suitable mayhem ensuing. "And lest anyone assume we're concerned with shallow escapism here," warns Warren, "*Start the Violence!* deals with some important issues—such as the pronunciation of 'junta,' and the alleged hypnotic qualities of Kei's rear end." W

*California-based writer Carl Horn is a great fan of the arts. Well, actually, he just likes to say he is to impress the women.*




**PHYSICALLY FINE** This doctor would love to give the Dirty Pair a check-up.

## F.Y.I.

MORE INFO

*Dirty Pair: Start the Violence!* will be a 24-page black-and-white story in three parts running through *Dark Horse Presents*, starting with #132 in May. Other Dirty Pair stories now available from Dark Horse include the 128-page *Dangerous Acquaintances* and 152-page *A Plague of Angels*, each for $12.95. The 104-page *Sim Hell* is $13.95. All the above are black-and-white; the only color Dirty Pair story thus far was *Fatal But Not Serious* (128 pages, $14.95). Later this year, look for a reprint of *Biohazards*, the very first Dirty Pair graphic novel.

# MANGAPICKS

MUST-READ JAPANESE COMICS SHIPPING IN MAY

## BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL: ON SILENT WINGS #1 (of 8)

**DARK HORSE COMICS**

Winner of Japan's Media Arts Award for the Best Manga of 1997, this new story arc is an excellent place to start with the realistic, cruel character observations and amazing charcoal artwork of Hiroaki Samura. In the days of the samurai, an immortal, but not invulnerable, swordsman walks with a young girl whose quest for revenge is leading to her own spiritual death.

## GUN CRISIS #1

**STUDIO IRONCAT**

Masaomi Kanzaki (*Xenon*, *Street Fighter II*) turns the action up to "11" in this series set in the who-dares-wins world of counter-terrorism. *Gun Crisis*' Heckler & Koch-toting heroine, a member of team Akatsuki ("Victory Dawn"), dodges both high-level corruption and high-velocity rounds as her unit makes for a secluded mountain villa where a VIP hostage situation is running down the clock, fast!

## KABA: KATSUHIRO OTOMO ARTWORK

### 1971-1989 ILLUSTRATION COLLECTION

**KODANSHA**

This 178-page hardcover collection of art by Katsuhiro Otomo is finally available again in stores this month as an import. Paintings and illustrations from *Akira* and *Domu* are here, but Kaba lets you into the wealth of Otomo's work unreleased in the United States, his career designing some of Japan's coolest commercials—and even the lucky school that got him to draw its yearbook cover! One of the very finest manga art books ever published—and it's in English!

## MIXX ZINE POCKET MANGA: PARASYTE GRAPHIC NOVEL #1

**MIXX PUBLICATIONS**

Collected from the early issues of *Mixx Zine*, the beginning of the "Parasyte" story has high-school student Shin and the morphing alien who has taken up residence in his left hand form an uneasy partnership against an Earth being rapidly colonized by the Parasyte's brethren. Already optioned for a film by James Cameron ("Titanic"), Hitoshi Iwaaki's bizarre, violent and satirical story has a strange—and compelling—simplicity to it.

## PULP (VOL. 2) #6

**VIZ COMICS**

*Dirty Pair*'s Toren Smith calls this anthology magazine "more representative of a 'typical manga' than anything else so far published in the U.S." In "Dance Till Tomorrow," Suekichi realizes the audience for his play is composed entirely of mobsters; "Strain" pits hitman Mayo against the sadistic cop Angel; and in "Black and White," will progress ruin the kids' strange city? *Pulp* is for adults only.

## ROBOTECH #8

**ANTARCTIC PRESS**

Ted Nomura and Jochen Weltjens fill in some of the empty corners of the sprawling *Robotech* storyline in "Variants: Part 1." Roy Fokker and Lisa Hayes are caught up in Mid-East combat during the days of the Global Civil War. When Lisa suffers a concussion, she "awakens" in an alternate timeline, where neither Rick Hunter nor Lynn Minmei survived the First Robotech War, but "Admiral" Fokker did!

## THE RETURN OF LUM—URUSEI YATSURA

### VOL. 7: FOR BETTER OR CURSE

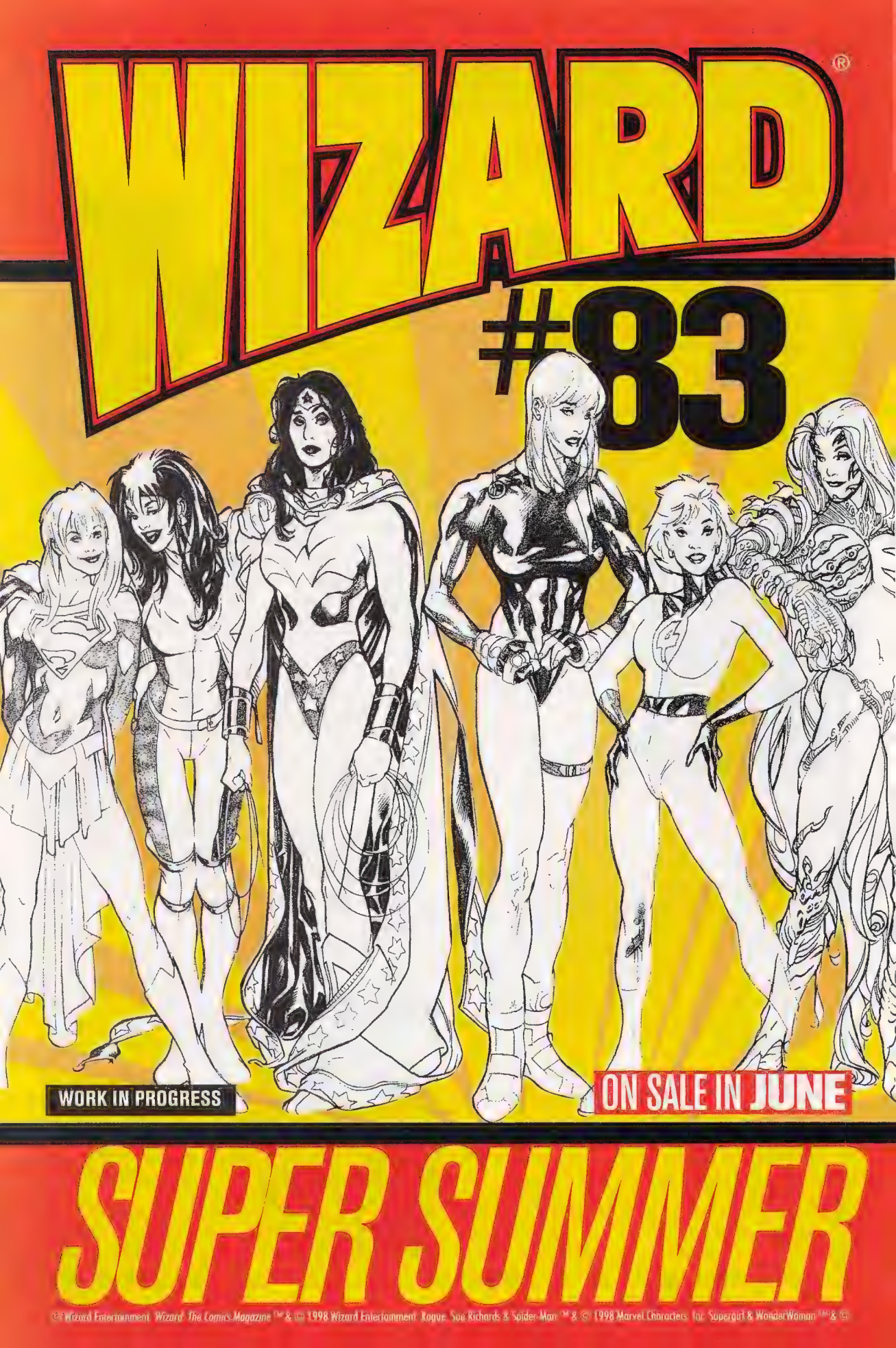
**VIZ COMICS**

With a girlfriend who looks beautiful in a tiger-striped bikini, how can Ataru be such a loser? Easy: The girl's an alien who's invaded his personal space, when all he wants is an independence day—to chase after every other girl on the planet! This is artist Rumiko Takahashi's (*Ranma 1/2*) series that practically invented the idea of the "campus love comedy" manga.

## THE TWO FACES OF TOMORROW #10 (of 13)

**DARK HORSE COMICS**

Masamune Shirow's (*Appleseed*) own favorite artist, Yukinobu Hoshino, continues his manga adaptation of James P. Hogan's hard-science fiction story of how a man-vs.-intelligent computer battle might actually unfold. The deadly game's been played so far with marines vs. robots—now gravity itself is the enemy, as the programmer team members race to regain control of their creation before rotational forces tear their space station apart! ■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TWO AMAZING GATEFOLD COVERS

ASTRO CITY BY ALEX ROSS

SUPERWOMEN of COMICS BY ADAM HUGHES

ISSUE SPIDER-MAN #1/2 COMIC OFFER!

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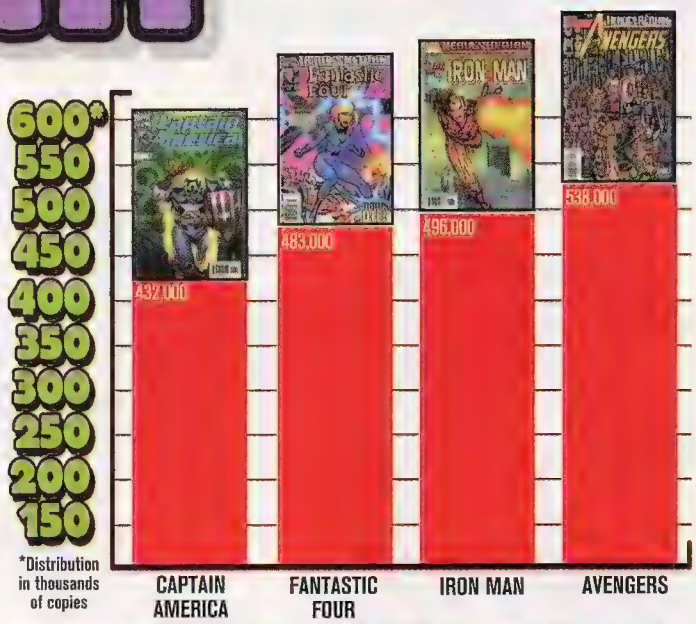
COMIC MARKET NEWS AND SUCH by Lars Pearson

# MARKET WATCH

## AVENGERS TAKE THE LEAD

### Title climbs to top of 'Heroes Return' heap




**HAPPY 'RETURN'S** *Avengers* leads the pack of "Heroes Return" sales. (Totals are cumulative, from December 1997 to March 1998. Source: Diamond Comic Distributors.)

Wallets assemble! Verily, the mighty Thor hath decreed that he and his Avengers companions art marching through comic shops like warriors true!

Or, more simply put, *Avengers* has quickly become the market's favorite "Heroes Reborn" title. Even though the new *Fantastic Four* and *Captain America* debuted higher, the normal sales drain usually seen after a #1 issue has had less an effect on *Avengers* than its "HR" companions. Why? Near as can be figured, two reasons: First, *Avengers* has kept coming up with "events" like the official announcement of the team membership roster in March's #4. Second, there's always those creators.

The *Avengers* title's success is due not so much to superheroes as it is to civilians: writer Kurt Busiek and penciler George Pérez. Many say Pérez is the only artist capable of doing justice to the dozens of Avengers thrown at him by the continuity-savvy Busiek. Together, Busiek and Pérez make a dynamic team. On top of that, Pérez has a history with *Avengers*, so older readers can revel in nostalgia even as younger kids are gosh-wowed by what's happening today.

And in the back-issue market? The future looks bright. Many retailers reported total sellouts of *Avengers* #1, and *Avengers* #2 was the first "Heroes Return" book to completely sell out from Diamond Comic Distributors. Back-issue prices are already on the rise.

Rule of thumb: If you like the team, buy current *Avengers* issues while they're still cheap, because they might get more expensive soon. And don't forget that Pérez had a run on the first volume of *Avengers* which was also pretty good. The epic "Korvac Saga" (Pérez did *Avengers* #167-#168 and #170-#171) and the anniversary #200 might be good places to start. So assemble some bucks, baby.

## 'COVEN' GATHERS READERS

Awesome Entertainment's *The Coven*, the story of two competing groups—the Coven and the Pentad—fighting over the legacy of Cain and Abel in today's world, is drawing more readers into its fold monthly.

*Coven* #1 was a sellout in many shops in its August 1997 debut, and as prices on #1 increased, a March-shipping *Coven Fan Appreciation Edition* reprint sold upwards of an additional 30,000 copies! Whew! Awesome Entertainment seems to have found its first back-issue hit.

The book already looked primed for success with the art of *Coven* creator Ian Churchill. Not that writer Jeph Loeb (*Batman: The Long Halloween*) is a lightweight, but Churchill amassed a heavy following during his days on *Cable* and the "Heroes Return" *Avengers* that seems to have followed him to his new book.

Helping out is the fact that Awesome has been doing well overall in the aftermarket. The company's *Kaboom* gets a healthy price boost this month, driven by the playful writing of Loeb and pencils of Jeff Matsuda (*X-Factor*). While *Kaboom* prices may flatten given its current "in limbo" publishing status, it's art draws manga-fan readers.

And if you're a completist, keep an eye on *Coven* #1+/*Kaboom* #1+, a black-and-white preview in flip-

book format. This #1+ comic was exclusive to a retailer called "A! List," but a sly shop in your area should be able to get you one. Good hunting.

## 'CATACLYSM' REBUILDS DC'S BAT-BOOKS

Billions in property damage. Maybe a million dead. Man, "Cataclysm" has been a lot of fun, hasn't it?

Listen hard and you can hear Gotham City's residents screaming *and* fans' feet shuffling to grab issues of "Batman: Cataclysm," the story arc that leveled Gotham with an earthquake in the first Bats crossover in over a year. Already, some issues are up to as much as $4 each in some areas, because although retailers boosted orders for "Cataclysm," the boost was as low as only five percent for some books. That translates to only a measly few thousand extra copies printed, and those have been snatched up lightning-fast.

**EARTHQUAKE!** "Cataclysm" is the best thing that ever happened to Gotham.

"Cataclysm" keeps selling out, as readers and reviewers pile on the kudos, and the crossover effect makes many fans buy every book. Prices could snap when DC releases a "Cataclysm" paperback, *or* the event (which has already decimated the Batcave and Wayne Manor) could have far-reaching effects that make it hard to ignore in the market. Keep paying attention.

PHOTOS: BUSIEK, DAVID, ADAM KUBERT, LEE, MADUREIRA, ROSS, SEAGLE, TURNER, MAID, Z. BY PAUL SCHRAUB; MORRISON, MOORE BY GUS MARTIN, LOBDELL BY J. SCHUYLER, SILVESTRI BY JIM McAUGH, ANDY KUBERT BY K. BLANKENSHIP, BACHALO COURTESY OF MARVEL COMICS.

# TOP 10 CREATORS

FAN FAVORITES

**These are the creators the fans crave. Creators whose name on a cover sells the book. *Wizard's* Top Ten Creators lists are derived from a nationwide retailer survey. Artists include pencilers and painters.**

## WRITERS

**1. Kurt Busiek**
*Astro City, Avengers*

**2. Joe Kelly**
*Deadpool, X-Men*

**3. Grant Morrison**
*JLA, The Invisibles*

**4. Mark Waid**
*Captain America, JLA: Year One*

**5. Peter David**
*Hulk, Supergirl*

**6. Garth Ennis**
*Preacher, Hitman*

**7. Steven T. Seagle**
*Uncanny X-Men, Alpha Flight*

**8. Christina Z.**
*Witchblade*

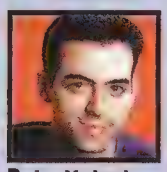
**9. Scott Lobdell**
*Daredevil*

**10. Alan Moore**
*Youngblood, Supreme*

## ARTISTS

**1. Michael Turner**
*Witchblade*

**2. Jim Lee**
*Divine Right*

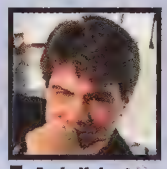


**3. Joe Madureira**
*Battle Chasers*

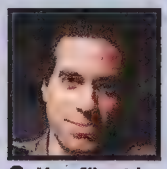
**4. Alex Ross**
upcoming: *Superman: P. on E.*

**5. Adam Kubert**
*Incredible Hulk*

**6. J. Scott Campbell**
*Danger Girl*



**7. Andy Kubert**
*Captain America*



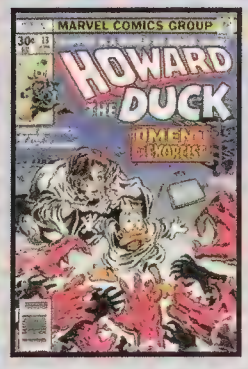
**8. Marc Silvestri**
upcoming: ???

**9. Leinil Yu**
*Wolverine*

**10. Chris Bachalo**
*Uncanny X-Men*

# BURIED TREASURE

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THIS




## HOWARD THE DUCK #13

Ya like Image's *KISS: The Psycho Circus*? Sure you do! Want KISS' first appearance in a comic? Sure you do! Think you've got it already in *Psycho Circus* #1? Wrong! You wouldn't know by looking at the cover, but Marvel's *Howard the Duck* #13 (Yep!) has comics' debut of the mega-popular mega-metal band.

And since *KISS: TPC* is challenging the *JLA*s and *Witchblade*s of the world in back-issue dominance, this former toilet-paper comic pricing at about $6 (Cheaper than a used KISS CD!) is looking like a huge bargain. Your biggest problem? Finding one. Better get those webbed feet moving. ■ LP

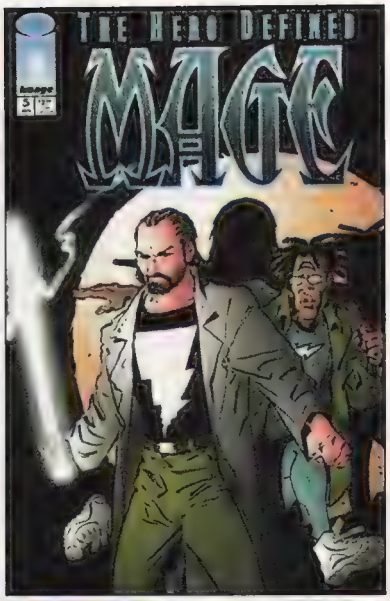
## 'MAGE' WORKS MAGIC

Next at the plate—the man with the glowing baseball bat!

Say "hi" to Kevin Matchstick, the star of *Mage* and possessor of a bat charged with the power of King Arthur's Excalibur. And as the following for Image's current *Mage: The Hero Defined* series grows, there's been a huge whiplash effect for issues of *Mage: The Hero Discovered*, the original *Mage* series published by Comico.

See, what Mage followers lack in numbers, they make up for in loyalty. And when they come knockin', retailers are only too happy to drag old *Mage* issues out of their attics, where they were collecting dust.

Keeping old-issue prices up is the fact that attempts to reprint the first *Mage* series have been stuck in legal limbo. While *Mage* creator Matt Wagner owns the character, there's some debate as to who owns the film used to print the Comico issues. Nothing has been firmed up yet, and this bad news for readers means a big happy for *Mage* back-issue prices.




**BATTER UP!** As *Mage* hits cleanup for Image, the series' loyal fan base keeps prices on the upswing.

By the way, *Mage* spillover is also affecting Comico's *Grendel* #16-#20, featuring "Mage" back-up stories. For completists who want every *Mage* appearance (which is fairly easy, since there aren't that many), these issues look interesting—even if they focus on French characters and there's only one line of English (Really!) in the first two issues. Still, it's *Mage* and it's Wagner, and to some readers, anything *Mage* is magical.

*Wizard Price Guide Manager Lars Pearson keeps hoping for a "Batman: Titanic" movie starring himself opposite Madonna. Maybe someday...*

# RETAILER NETWORK & V.I.P.s

RELIABLE SOURCES

Bruno Andreacchi
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121 Oxford St. East London
Ontario, Canada NGA 1T4
(519) 439-9636

Chris Barchuk
Wizard World
Rockland Center
51 E. Rt. 59
Nanuet, NY 10954
(914) 624-2224

Dave Braunstein
Eldorado Comics
2110 E. Rt. 70
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034
(609) 489-1199

Rich Conley
Heroes & Fantasies
914 Pat Brooker Road
Universal City, TX 78148
(210) 945-9884

D. Roberts & J. Walker
Legends Comics
Kentucky Oaks Mall
5101 Hinkleville Rd.
Paducah, KY 42001
(612) 822-2806

Dash Hobbeheydar &
Mark Laskowski
And Then it Rained Comics
P.O. Box 11041
Scottsdale, AZ 85271
(602) 990-9224

Steve Huber
Galaxy Comics
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Richmond, IN 47374
(765) 962-6239

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Manchester, CT 06040
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Ivan Matos
Comic Connection
2128-C Fort Campbell Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37042
(615) 572-9588

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6787 Lee Highway
Chattanooga, TN 37421
(423) 490-0501

Avrom Oliver
Adventures in Comics & Games
6026 Fair Oaks Blvd.
Carmichael, CA 95608
(916) 973-9064

Jerry Ringi
Amazing Fantasy
4300 Portsmouth Blvd.
Suite 192
Chesapeake, VA 23321
(757) 465-8390

Tom Shea
TJ Collectibles
160 Main St.
Milford, MA 01757
(508) 473-5874

Steve Snyder
Central City Comics
1460 Bethel Rd.
Columbus, OH 43220
(614) 459-5045

Joel Thingvall
Nostalgia Zone
3149 1/2 Hennepin Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55406
(612) 822-2806

Doug Miers
Comics Conspiracy
115 A. East Fremont Ave.
Sunnyville, CA 94087
(408) 245-6275

Stuart Wagner
Caveman
1344 E. Battlefield
Springfield, MO 65804
(417) 882-2283

Robert Scott
Comickaze Comics
& Sportscards
5615 Balboa Ave.
San Diego, CA 92111
(619) 278-0371

Nolan Wyatt
Golden Apple Comics
7711 Melrose
Los Angeles, CA 90046
(213) 658-6047

Todd McDevitt
New Dimension Comics
Units 20-21
20550 Rte. 19
Cranberry Township, PA
16066-7520
(412) 776-0433

Phil Davis
B & D Comic Shop
802 Elm St. South West
Roanoke, VA 24016
(703) 342-6642

Damon McCulloch
Comics & Comix
6135 Sunrise Blvd.
Citrus Heights, CA 95610
(916) 969-0717

Robert Letscher II
Key Comics
PO Box 3855
Scottsdale, AZ 85271-3855
(602) 949-8499

John Chruskinski &
Bruce Ellsworth
Tropic Comics
313 S. State Rd. #7
Plantation, FL 33317

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Comic Connection
21280 Ft. Campbell Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37042
(615) 572-9588

David Beauchamp
Penguin Comics
3315 S. Welwood
Springfield, MO 65804
(417) 551-2051

John Graziano
Comics Plus
1383 Highway 35
Middletown, NJ 07748
(908) 706-0102

Mark Thompson
Cold Cuts
5704 Calmor Ave. #1
San Jose, CA 95123
(408) 229-0930

Jamie Graham
5 East Chicago Ave.
Naperville, IL 60540
(630) 778-0700

Mike Johnson
Golden Apple
7711 Melrose Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Brian Johnson
All About Books & Comics
517 E. Camelback
Phoenix, AZ 85012
(602) 277-0757

**RETAILER NETWORK** A-1 Book Exchange in St.. Louis, Mo.; Back to the Past in Livonia, M.I.; Bali Book Store in Alhambra, Calif.; Beyond Comics in Medford, Ore.; Bob's Cards and Comics in Buzzard's Bay, Mass.; Book Barn inJoplin, Mo.; Book Trader in Minot, N.D.; Bookman's Used Books in Flagstaff, Ariz.; C & C Cards & Comics in St. Albans, W. Va.; California Card Company in Elk Grove, Calif.; Cards Coins & Comics in Davenport, Iowa; Clark's Comics in Hong Kong; Classic Comics in Philadelphia, Pa.; Classic Comics #2 in Philadelphia, Pa.; Collection Connection in Greensboro, N.C., Collector's World in Anderson, In; Comic Archives in Apple Valley, Minn.; Comic Case in Trenton, N.J.; Comic Collector in Riverside, Ill.; Comic Den in Kew Gardens, N.Y.; Comic Encounters in Terrence, British Columbia, Canada; Comic World in Lincoln, Nev.; Comics, Cards and Stuff in Ft. Myers, Fla.; Comics & Cards Trading Post in Montgomery, Ala.; Comics Direct in Niceville, Fla.; Comics Galaxy in Singapore; Comics Plus in Los Banos, Calif.; Comics Plus in Middletown, N.J.; Comics Plus in Ocean, N.J.; Comics Plus in Wanamassa, N.J.; Comics Unlimited in North Bend, Ore.; Comix & More in Chino, Calif.; Dizzy's Dugout in Collinsville, Ill.; Duncanville Bookstore in Duncanville, Texas; E + C Books in Alliance, Ohio; Emerald City Comics and Collectibles in Seminole, Fla.; Excalibur C's., CD's. & G's. in Texarkana, Texas; Fandom's Comic World of Reno in Reno, Nev.; Fun House Toys & Comics in Orleans, Mass.; Golden Empire Bookstore in Bakersfield, Ohio; Golden Unicorn Comics in Hazleton, Pa.; Gypsy Witch Comics in Staunton, Va.; Heroes and Dragons in Columbia, S.C.; Heroes & Fantasies in San Antonio, Texas; Hot Comics East in St. Paul, Minn.; Hudmar Ltd. in Marlboro, Mass.; Independent Comics in Gainesville, Fla.; J & E Cards & Comics Ltd. in Baltimore, Md.; Key Comics in Scottsdale, Ariz.; Kim's Collectible Comics in Seabrook, Md.; Lionheart in Ranchos Palos Verdes, Calif.; Locker Room in East Liverpool, Ohio; Mac's Cards in Vernon, Conn.; Marie's Books & Things in Fredericksburg, Va.; Mr. Green's Comics in Dublin, Calif.; New Age Comics in Chico, Calif.; New Time Machine in Bradentown, Fla.; Night Flight in Salt Lake City, Utah; Nostalgia Zone in Minneapolis, Minn.; 1,000,000 Comix of Idaho in Boise, Idaho; Plus Comics in Roanoke, Va.; Rangeline Comics in Indianapolis, Ind.; Rhino Supreme Comics & Cards in Ridgefield Park, N.J.; Rockabilly Comics in Beverly Hills, Calif.; Rockbottom Comics in Columbia, Mo.; Seventh Star Comics & Gifts in Florence, S.C.; Showcase Collectibles in Alpharetta, Ga.; Showcase Comics & Cards in Selden, N.Y.; Southwest Comics in Del Rio, Texas; TJ Collectibles in Milford, Mass.; Taurus Comics in Port Huron, Mich.; The Card Connection in Columbus, Ohio; The Clubhouse in Encinitas, Calif.; The Comic Shop in Oswego, N.Y.; The Drawing Board in North Plainfield, N.J.; The Gamer's Den in Washington, Mo.; The Main Event in Casa Grande, Ariz.; TNT's Comic Market in Lawrence, Kan.; Twin Book Stores in Morehead City, N.C.; Warren's Bookstore in Lecanto, Fla.; Wilson's Comics & Cards in San Antonio, Texas; Wonder CD's + C's in Montpelier, Vt.; Wonder Years in Alpharetta, Ga.; Woodland Comics & Cards in Woodland, Calif.

# TOP 10 comics

***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. These are the books ringing the registers this month...**

## 1. WITCHBLADE #1

**WRITERS:** David Wohl, Brian Haberlin and Christina Z.
**ARTISTS:** Michael Turner and D-Tron

Just to prove that what goes around, comes around, we proudly present *Witchblade* #1 in the ol' top slot once again. This baby's been hangin' in the "Top 10" stratosphere so long, Witchy oughtta have a nosebleed by now. But she doesn't. In fact, she's a remarkably healthy chick, as any cursory examination of her anatomy should reveal. Oh, yeah. Just let us be in charge of the chest X-rays and we'd be happy campers. **LAST MONTH:** 4

## 2 JLA #1

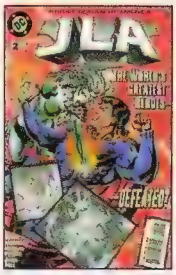
**WRITER:** Grant Morrison
**ARTISTS:** Howard Porter and John Dell

So, anyhoo, in *JLA* #1, a batch of bad-guys-disguised-as-good-guys show up, calling themselves "the Hyperclan." What a crapola name. Sounds like a bad teenybopper band name, or perhaps a roller derby team. "Oh, no! Here comes the Hyperclan! They're going to hype us up, or invite us to a family reunion or something! Whatever shall we do?" Call Menudo or call the Kansas City Bombers, that's what. These lame-asses are unworthy of the JLA's attention. **LAST MONTH:** 5

## 3 KISS: THE PSYCHO CIRCUS #1

**WRITER:** Brian Holguin
**ARTISTS:** Angel Medina and Kevin Conrad

Kiss the psycho circus? Why the hell would anyone want to kiss a psycho circus? Ya ever *look* at those inbred freaks who run the carnival games? The guys with nose warts the size of Keebler Fudge Stripe cookies? The circus geeks? We ain't kissin' 'em. We'll just read the comic instead. **LAST MONTH:** 3



## 4 JLA #2

**WRITER:** Grant Morrison
**ARTISTS:** Howard Porter and John Dell

So, by *JLA* #2, the Hyperclan is still around. But what do we quickly learn? They're really Martians in disguise! Even though JLA member J'Onn J'Onzz is supposedly the last Martian alive. Oh, wait! These must be the *other* last Martians left alive. Yeah, that's it. Whatta chowderhead idea. **LAST MONTH:** 2

## 5 DARKNESS #11 (CHROMIUM COVER)

**WRITERS:** Garth Ennis and Malachy Coney
**ARTISTS:** Marc Silvestri, Joe Benitez, Clarence Lansang and Livesay

Note that this month's top five comics are last month's top five in different order. Now it can be told: Every month, we toss chicken bones into a boiling pot of blood and see what rises to the top. The *Darkness* #11 wing bone came up fifth this month. **LAST MONTH:** 1

## 6 DIVINE RIGHT #1

**WRITER:** Jim Lee
**ARTISTS:** Jim Lee and Scott Williams

So here's the deal: Gillette, maker of fine men's toiletries, calls Jim Lee with a merchandising possibility. The company wants to produce a brand of underarm deodorant called "Divine Right Guard." There's a lot of money in it, but Lee takes a pass on the deal. He says the book doesn't stink *that* bad. **LAST MONTH:** 9

## 7 ASCENSION #1

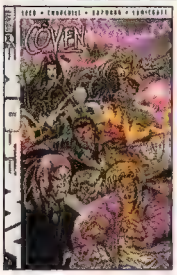
**WRITERS:** David Finch and Batt
**ARTISTS:** David Finch and Batt

*Ascension* is (Warning–really bad pun ahead!) ascending the charts pretty durned rapidly. Why? Two reasons: Everything from Top Cow that's not named *Nine Volt* seems to turn to gold and the Finch-Batt art is so durned pretty, readers will no doubt pop a cornea looking at it. **LAST MONTH: NOT RATED (N.R.)**

## 8 UNCANNY X-MEN #350

**WRITER:** Steven T. Seagle
**ARTISTS:** Joe Madureira, Andy Smith, Tim Townsend, Vince Russell and Dan Panosian

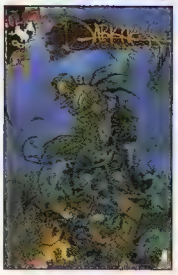
When are they gonna get canny? Huh? Since issue #114, the X-Men have been "Uncanny." When do they get, as Webster would say, "careful and shrewd in one's actions"? Look, 236 issues (give or take a few) is a long time. We just think they shoulda wised up by now. **LAST MONTH:** 7



## 9 THE COVEN #1

**WRITERS:** Jeph Loeb and Ian Churchill
**ARTISTS:** Ian Churchill and Norm Rapmund

Fantom! Spellcaster! Scratch! Blackmass! Phenomena! Are they the new batch of nWo wrasslers? Nah, they're the Coven, the five mystical protectors of the Awesome Universe. Buzz on their book is building fast, largely due to the mad skills of writer/artist Ian Churchill. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**



## 10 THE DARKNESS #1

**WRITER:** Garth Ennis
**ARTISTS:** Marc Silvestri and Batt

Here's a simple Top Cow equation: Crust = Good. Top Cow's big guns, Witchblade and the Darkness, both get crusty pseudo-armor crap all over their bodies when they use their powers. It looks kinda scabby, but hey–it sells. Guess that's what kids want these days. That and the Spice Girls. **LAST MONTH:** 8

THE HIGHEST-ORDERED BOOKS FOR THE MONTH OF **MARCH**

# TOP 100

**Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff, and working off the data supplied by Diamond Comic Distributors.**

Keep an eye on newcomer artist German Garcia, whose work debuted on *X-Men #75*.

**1. X-Men #75 (Marvel)**
2. Uncanny X-Men #355 (Marvel)
3. Spawn #72 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
4. The Avengers #4 (Marvel)
**5. Danger Girl #1 (WildStorm/Image)**
6. Fantastic Four #5 (Marvel)
7. Wolverine #124 (Marvel)
8. JLA #18 (DC)
9. Iron Man #4 (Marvel)
10. Captain America #5 (Marvel)
**11. Tales of the Darkness #1 (Top Cow/Image)**
12. The Darkness #14 (Top Cow/Image)
13. Curse of the Spawn #19 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
14. Generation X #38 (Marvel)
15. JLA: Year One #5 (DC)
**16. Amazing Spider-Man #434 (Marvel)**
17. X-Force #77 (Marvel)
18. X-Man #38 (Marvel)
19. X-Factor #145 (Marvel)
20. X-Men/Alpha Flight #1 (Marvel)
**21. Peter Parker: Spider-Man #91 (Marvel)**
22. Incredible Hulk #464 (Marvel)
**23. Divine Right: T.A.O.M.F. #6 (WildStorm/Image)**
24. Cable #54 (Marvel)
**25. Spectacular Spider-Man #257 (Marvel)**
26. Ascension #6 (Top Cow/Image)
27. Gen$^{13}$ #27 (WildStorm/Image)
**28. Sensational Spider-Man #27 (Marvel)**
29. Darkchylde #0 (WildStorm/Image)
30. Star Trek: TNG/X-Men: Second Contact #1 (Marvel)
31. Superman #135 (DC)
32. KISS: The Psycho Circus #8 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
33. Action Comics #744 (DC)
34. Batman #554 (DC)
35. Adventures of Superman #557 (DC)
36. Excalibur #120 (Marvel)
37. Superman: The Man of Steel #79 (DC)
38. Thunderbolts #14 (Marvel)
39. Detective Comics #721 (DC)
40. Nightwing #20 (DC)
41. Gen$^{12}$ #2 (WildStorm/Image)
42. Alpha Flight #10 (Marvel)
43. Generation X: Underground (Marvel)
44. Deadpool #16 (Marvel)
45. Green Lantern #98 (DC)
46. Preacher #37 (Vertigo/DC)
47. The Tenth #7 (Image)
48. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #74 (DC)
49. Catwoman #57 (DC)
50. Robin #53 (DC)
51. The Flash #137 (DC)
52. Nightwing and Huntress #1 (DC)
53. Marvel Annual '98 Starring: Cable & Machine Man (Marvel)
54. Batman: Arkham Asylum—Tales of Madness #1 (DC)
55. Star Wars: Crimson Empire #4 (Dark Horse)
56. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #106 (DC)
57. Batman: Huntress/Spoiler—Blunt Trauma #1 (DC)
58. Supergirl #21 (DC)
59. Wonder Woman #133 (DC)
60. The Batman Chronicles #12 (DC)
61. Spider-Man Unlimited #20 (Marvel)
62. Batman: Bane of the Demon #3 (DC)
63. Lady Death #3 (Chaos!)
64. Legends of the DC Universe #4 (DC)
65. Green Lantern & Sentinel: Heart of Darkness #3 (DC)
66. Voodoo #4 (WildStorm/Image)
67. Pitt #17 (Full Bleed Studios)
68. The X-Files #39 (Topps)
69. WildCORE #4 (WildStorm/Image)
70. Star Wars: The Last Command #4 (Dark Horse)
71. S. Wars: Shadows of the Empire—Evolution #2 (D.H.)
72. Ka-Zar #13 (Marvel)
73. Gen$^{13}$ Bootleg #17 (WildStorm/Image)
74. Xena: Warrior Princess—Orpheus #1 (Topps)
75. Xena: Warrior Princess—Callisto #2 (Topps)
76. Heroes for Hire #11 (Marvel)
77. Starman #42 (DC)
78. WildC.A.T.s #47 (WildStorm/Image)
79. Lady Death: Dragon Wars (Chaos!)
80. Team Superman Secret Files #1 (DC)
81. Teen Titans #20 (DC)
82. Thing/She-Hulk (Marvel)
83. Azrael #41 (DC)
84. Silver Surfer #139 (Marvel)
85. Star Wars: X-Wing R.S.—Masquerade #1 (D.H.)
86. Aquaman #44 (DC)
87. What If? #108 (Marvel)
88. Babylon 5: In Valen's Name #3 (DC)
89. Maverick #9 (Marvel)
90. Daredevil #375 (Marvel)
91. Elektra #18 (Marvel)
92. Supergirl Adventures #1 (DC)
**93. Dragonball Z #1 (Viz)**
94. Hitman #26 (DC)
**95. Nevada #1 (Vertigo/DC)**
96. Fury/Agent 13 #1 (Marvel)
97. Superboy #51 (DC)
98. Legion of Super-Heroes #104 (DC)
99. Youngblood #2 (Awesome)
100. Bone #32 (Cartoon Books)

# TOP 100 HIGHLIGHTS

## CELEBRATION X!

**X-Men #75 (No. 1)**
The more established *Uncanny X-Men* usually sits atop our list, but the double-sized *X-Men* #75 carries the No. 1 slot this month with the help of an "anniversary" feel and the much-hyped revelations about mystery X-Man Maggott.

**Danger Girl #1 (No. 5)**
Girl power! WildStorm's new Cliffhanger imprint debuted very respectably with this inaugural book by creator J. Scott Campbell (*Gen13*). *Danger Girl* #1 also had a Chromium variant with orders that *would* have placed it 43rd on the charts. But since the Chromium edition was limited to 5,000 copies, orders were allocated. And since "Top 100" reflects actual sales, not phantom orders, the Chromium didn't make the chart.

**Tales of the Darkness #1 (No. 11)**
Helped by groovy art from Whilce Portacio (*Iron Man*), Top Cow's *Darkness* spinoff landed—excuse the pun—in the black. This strong spinoff showing indicates that readers aren't scared that this quarterly series showcases Darkness wielders other than current Darkness-boy Jackie Estacado; in fact, *Tales* beat Jackie's book by one notch.

**Spider-Man: "Identity Crisis" books (Nos. 16, 21, 25, 28)**
The curiosity factor was high for "Identity Crisis," the storyline that had Spidey take on four new and different identities. What's curiosity worth in this case? How about a big 10 percent sales boost across the board? Not too shabby.

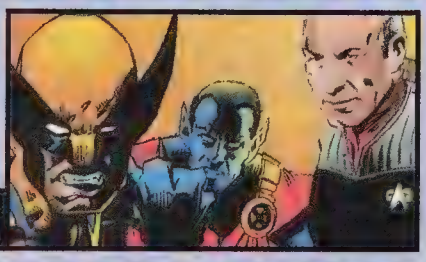
**Divine Right: The Adventures of Max Faraday #6 (No. 23)**
This title took a while to pop, but readers have been getting on the *Divine Right* bandwagon with regularity, and the title is showing slow and steady growth. WildStorm purposely held off hyping the book, hoping that word-of-mouth would help sales grow. Looks like they were right.

**Dragonball Z #1 (No. 93)**
Honk if you've heard of Viz Comics! (Insert dead silence here.) Manga specialist Viz hasn't had a "Top 100" book since...well, probably forever. But spurred on by the popular cartoon of the same name, *Dragonball Z* finally hit the big time. By the way, its sister title *Dragonball* ranked at a lower No. 110, 'cause kids in America are more familiar with the "Z" attached to the name.

**Nevada #1 (No. 95)**
It's about a Las Vegas showgirl and her pet ostrich. Lots of dirty jokes come to mind, but all kidding aside, this is a pretty good showing, given the odd premise and given that the mini-series' writer Steve Gerber (*Howard the Duck*) and artist Phil Winslade (*Wonder Woman: Amazonia*) aren't exactly household names. It boggles the mind—rather like the Vertigo books themselves can on occasion.

# CLOSE-UP LOOK

Break it on down now! Here's a look at March's top-selling books in a couple of categories, with their overall Diamond Comic Distributors "Top 300" rankings in parentheses.



**RETURN 'ENGAGEMENT** Marvel's second Star Trek/X-Men pairing had bold sales figures.

## TOP 10 MOVIE/TV BOOKS

1. Star Trek: TNG/X-Men: Second Contact #1 (Marvel, No. 30)
2. The X-Files #39 (Topps, No. 68)
3. Star Wars: The Last Command #4 (Dark Horse, No. 70)
4. S. Wars: Shadows of the Empire: Evolution #2 (D.H., No. 71)
5. Xena: Warrior Princess—Orpheus #1 (Topps, No. 74)
6. Xena: Warrior Princess—Callisto #2 (Topps, No. 75)
7. S. Wars: X-Wing Rogue Squadron—Masq. #1 (D.H., No. 85)
8. Babylon 5: In Valen's Name #3 (DC, No. 88)
9. Dragonball Z #1 (Viz, No. 93)
10. Batman Adventures: The Lost Years #5 (DC, No. 109)

## BOTTOM 10 BOOKS

291. Jughead #105 (Archie)
292. Hepcats #8 (Antarctic)
293. Hepcats #7 (Antarctic)
294. Foot Soldiers #4 (Image)
295. Anatomic Bombs: Bad Tabitha Photo Ed. #1 (Brainstorm)
296. Vampirella/Painkiller Jane Ashcan (Harris)
297. Archie Digest #155 (Archie)
298. Horseman #4 (Kevlar Studios)
299. Helsing #1 (Caliber)
300. Jughead's Double Digest #51 (Archie)

# LOOKING BACK

**SUPERMAN LIVES!** The Cyborg and three other "Super-subs" bowed in *Adventures* #500.

**What topped the charts FIVE YEARS AGO?**

1. Adventures of Superman #500 (Direct; DC)
2. Action Comics #687 (Direct; DC)
3. Superman #78 (Direct; DC)
4. Adventures of Superman #501 (Direct; DC)
5. Superman: The Man of Steel #22 (Direct; DC)
6. Turok: Dinosaur Hunter #1 (Valiant)
7. Deathblow #1 (Image)
8. Spawn #12 (Image)
9. Bloodstrike #1 (Image)
10. Adv. of Superman #500 (Newsstand; DC)

What do you do for an encore after killing Superman? Five years ago this month, DC debuted four possible Superman replacements. And feeding off the prior death hoopla, six Superman titles (including *two* versions of *Adventures of Superman* #500) hit the Top 10. Can you say "supply and demand"? You might as well filter your coffee with the mammoth-ordered *Adventures* #500 for what it's worth now.

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AZINE #12

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## on-line stuff

Wizard World on the Web has moved! Our new location at http://www.wizardworld.com features a spiffy new design and tons of new pictures and articles. Also, on AOL this month don't miss the Creative Differences chat (May 19) and the Sean Chen chat (May 26). So there.

## software

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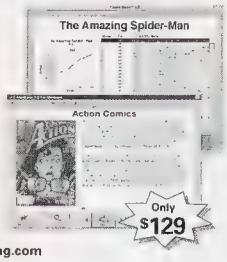


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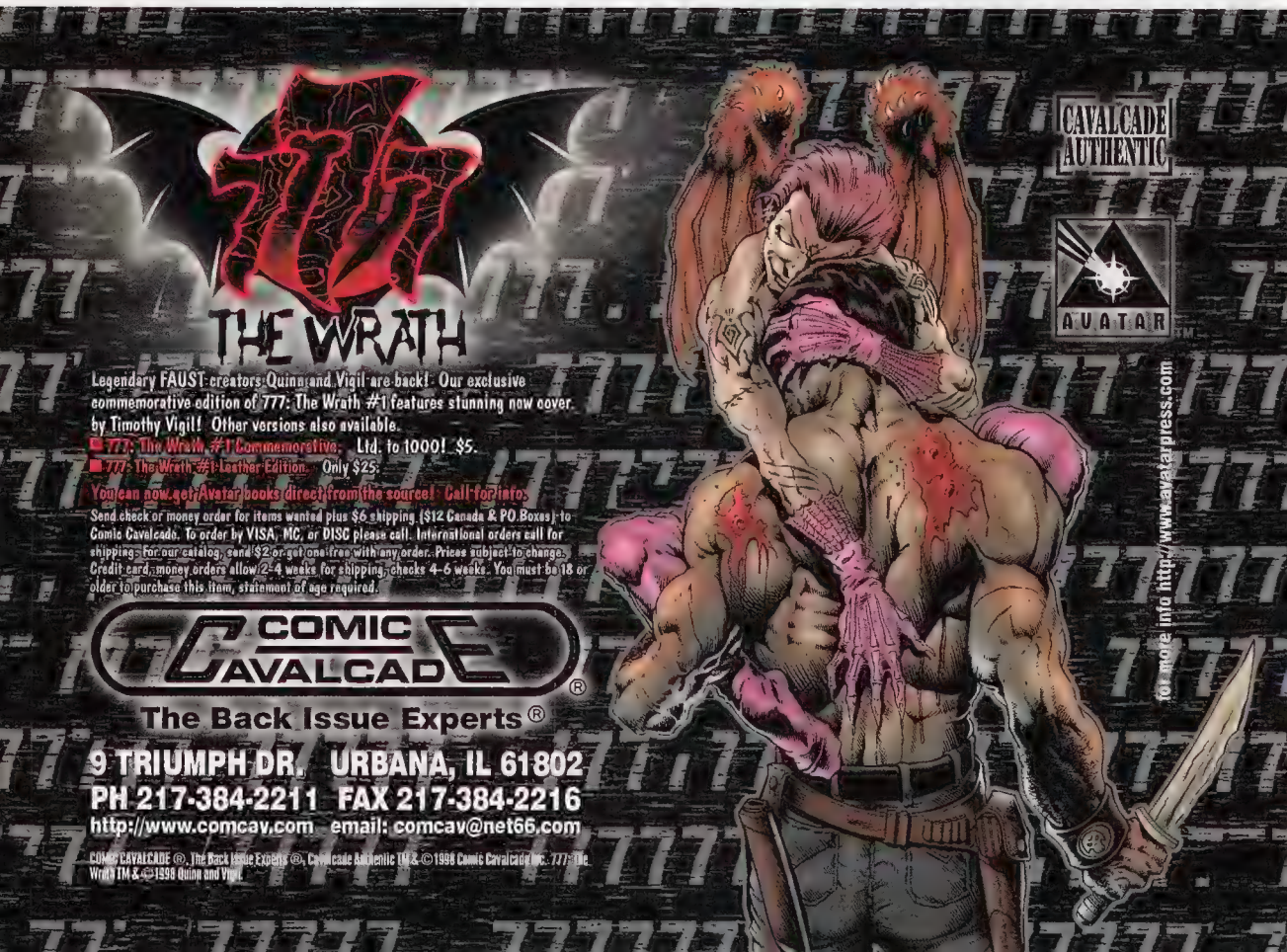

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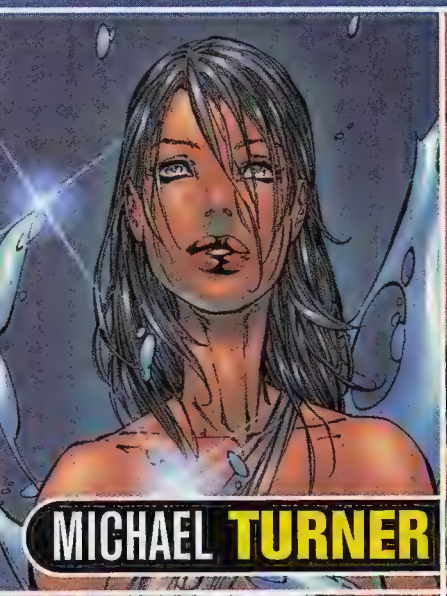
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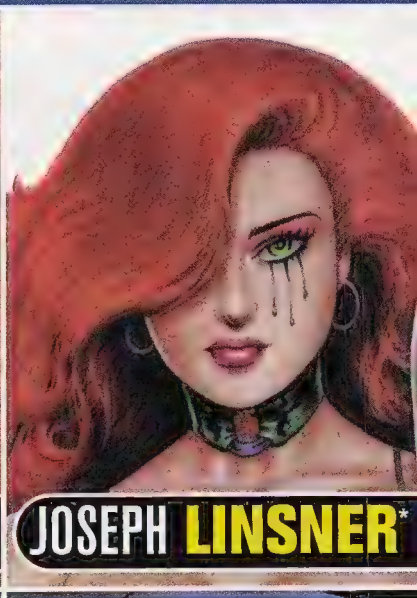
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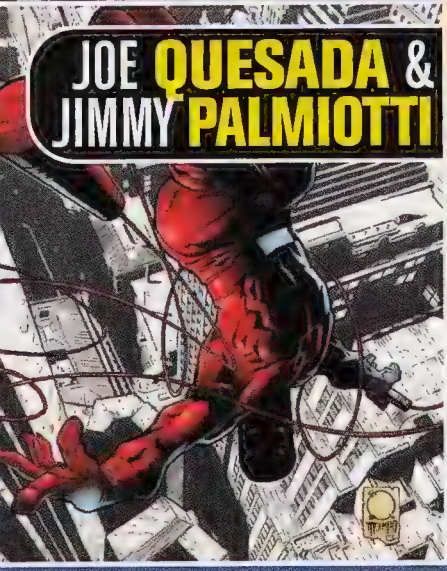
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# C.B.I.Q.

## YOU THINK YOU'RE SO SMART...

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

**Pro wrestling rules! While everybody who's anybody knows that, some of the finer points of wrasslin' occasionally get overlooked. In an effort to spread some culture, we'll grade your score this month against *those wrestling moves that never fail to be crowd-pleasers*. The higher your score, the keener the move!**

| SCORE | RANK |
|---|---|
| 0-4 | *Chair to the head: Guaranteed to flatten even the most "Hulked-out" opponent (And luckily, with chairs being so small, the ref'll never see it!).* |
| 5-9 | *Salt in the eyes: Like Satan entered the ring and whizzed on your foe's face.* |
| 10-14 | *Nut shot: No man alive can withstand this dreaded move, AND it might win you 10 grand on "America's Funniest Home Videos."* |
| 15 | *Midgets: Not really a hold, but put a masked midget covered with tassels in the ring and the crowd'll love you like you were handin' out twenties!* |

**1 During his debut, Astro City's new Jack-in-the-Box battled:**
A) Shadow Hill Killer.
B) Brass Monkey.
C) Mr. Bridwell.
D) The Juice Loosener.

**2 What breakthrough electronic components first allowed Iron Man to create his armor?**
A) fiber optics
B) circuit boards
C) transistors
D) Ball-bearings. It's all ball-bearings these days.

**3 The Bone cousin who gads about nekkid is...**
A) ...Fone Bone.
B) ...Phoney Bone.
C) ...Smiley Bone.
D) ..."Johnny Wad" Bone.

**4 That Cajun cad Gambit joined the X-Men after...**
A) ...meeting Wolverine in a bayou brewhouse brawl.
B) ...burglarizing homes with a de-aged Storm.
C) ...mediating a dispute between the X-Men and the Morlocks.
D) ...puking up crayfish and tequila on the X-driveway.

**5 In their first meeting, Speedy failed to impress his soon-to-be-mentor Green Arrow because...**
A) ...his arrows were magnetized and wouldn't fly straight.
B) ...he drove the Arrowcar into a tar pit.
C) ...his prowess with a bow was overshadowed by his cockiness.
D) ...he didn't bring enough smack for everybody.

**6 Which young boy has the potential to become DC's greatest mage?**
A) Tim Drake
B) Bart Allen
C) Tim Hunter
D) *Wizard*'s own Jim McLauchlin, but fried food and booze have taken their toll, and now there's no way the Comics Code would approve his doughy ass showing up clad only in spandex.

**7 How'd the Spider-Mobile finally meet its welcome end?**
A) It was crushed in the mechanical grip of Doctor Octopus.
B) Spider-Man mistakenly drove it into a river.
C) Spidey came back home to find it stripped and up on blocks.
D) He ran over a Cub Scout and couldn't dig out all the meat, bone and hair ground into the front grill, so he hadda ditch the car in a swamp.

**8 In the first *Secret Wars*, a pack of supervillains flew back to Earth on...**
A) ...a crude rocket constructed by Doctor Doom.
B) ...one of the Beyonder's escape pods.
C) ...a particle-beam transport.
D) ...Denver.

**9 Which spooky Spawn mainstay was created by Mr. Spooky himself, *Sandman* scribe Neil Gaiman?**
A) Angela
B) Tiffany
C) Violator
D) Nell Carter, she-devil with a sword!

**10 Marvel's Psycho-Man calls which bizarre dimension home?**
A) The Microverse
B) The Negative Zone
C) Dormammu's Dread Domain
D) the Wizard World comic con

**11 *Strangers in Paradise*'s Queen of Mean, Darcy Parker, finally had her ugly clock stopped when...**
A) ...her bodyguard shot her in the head.
B) ...Katchoo dropped her into a vat of molten iron.
C) ...her brother David tripped her down an elevator shaft.
D) ...her heart stopped as creator Terry Moore announced Abstract Studio's "Goat Month."

**12 That pixelated *Tomb Raider* heartthrob, Lara Croft, got her taste for adventure when...**
A) ...thieves broke into her family estate and took her hostage.
B) ...her plane crashed in the mountains, forcing her to fight for survival.
C) ...she journeyed through Tibet searching for a long-lost family heirloom.
D) Who cares, we just wanna find out the address for that "Nude Raider" Website.

**13 The Spider-villainess White Rabbit is 15 pounds of lame stuffed into a 10-pound bag. Which equally lame heroes recently brought her to justice?**
A) "Bag-Man" and the Mad Hatter
B) Power Man and Iron Fist
C) Grizzly and the Gibbon
D) El Aguila and Bobo, the clubfooted rodeo clown with tourettes

**14 This former Image superteam changed publishers, got a new lineup and in its first new #1 issue, battled an alien parasite. Name the team—or face the wheel!**
A) Youngblood
B) Weapon Zero
C) Gen[12]
D) The answer's "A." Free plug: Go read the new *Youngblood*. Yeah, all the old series of that book sucked, but this one is kick-ass! Alan Moore's best work since *Watchmen*. Honest!

**15 Speaking of *Watchmen*, demented pseudo-hero Rorschach had an interesting method of extracting info from stoolies:**
A) He'd bungee-toss them from helicopters.
B) He'd cut their toes off.
C) He'd break their fingers.
D) He'd sit them down and make 'em read all them OLD issues of *Youngblood*. Free plug: When you read the new *Youngblood* and are wowed by how cool it is, resist the urge to go and read the original series. Those books are the paper equivalent to a loose bowel movement.

## ANSWERS

Candy-asses can peek on the next page if this is too tough...

# BULLPEN LOOK BEHIND THE CURTAIN

## *Wizard*: 2, *ToyFare*: 1

*Wizard* finally got theirs.

Those who follow "Bullpen" know of the inter-office rivalry between the staffs of *Wizard* and *ToyFare* (*Wizard*'s sister toy magazine). It all started months ago when the *ToyFare* offices were Saran-wrapped, and then, weeks later, covered with hundreds of photocopied faces of the *Wizard* editors. Both acts of terrorism shared two things in common: Both seemed perpetrated by *Wizard* thugs, and both "hits" were left unanswered. Until now.

On the morning of March 20, the communal office of *Wizard* editors Brian Cunningham, Andrew Kardon, Greg Orlando and Marc Wilkofsky was criss-crossed with over 2,500 feet of string, leaving the foursome gap-mouthed and awestruck.

Editor Brian Cunningham summed up the general *Wizard* staff consensus with "Given a little time and money, the guilty parties..."–shooting a glance toward the *ToyFare* offices—"...are gonna learn that when you mess with the bull, you get the horns!"

The *ToyFare* staff, barricaded in their offices as they are, were unavailable for comment.

**HIGH-STRUNG** The Wizard office gets "hit."

PHOTO: JIM WALDECKER/IN MOTION

## TOP 10 comic characters that sound more like porn stars

10 The Punisher
9 Mr. Fantastic
8 Moon-Boy
7 Iron Fist
6 Elongated Man
5 Hourman
4 Black Goliath
3 The In-Betweener
2 Wood God
1 Angar the Screamer

## C.B.I.Q. answers...

1. B 6. C 11. A
2. C 7. B 12. B
3. A 8. D 13. C
4. B 9. A 14. A
5. A 10. A 15. C

# ONE OF THE DAMNED

## Joe Yanarella SENIOR MANAGING EDITOR

**WHY WE PAY HIM:** "I recruit new Wizard employees, traffic my body weight in paperwork and ensure that not only is there a *Wizard* every month, but that it gets out on time. I'm also the voice of reason in a sea of ass jokes."

**BEST OUT-OF-CONTEXT QUOTE:** "He had a colon in his nut graph." (In reference to editing a "Wizard News & Notes" story.)

**MOST BIZARRE *WIZARD* MOMENT:** "Eating some homemade brownies laced with laxative that had been left by the water cooler."

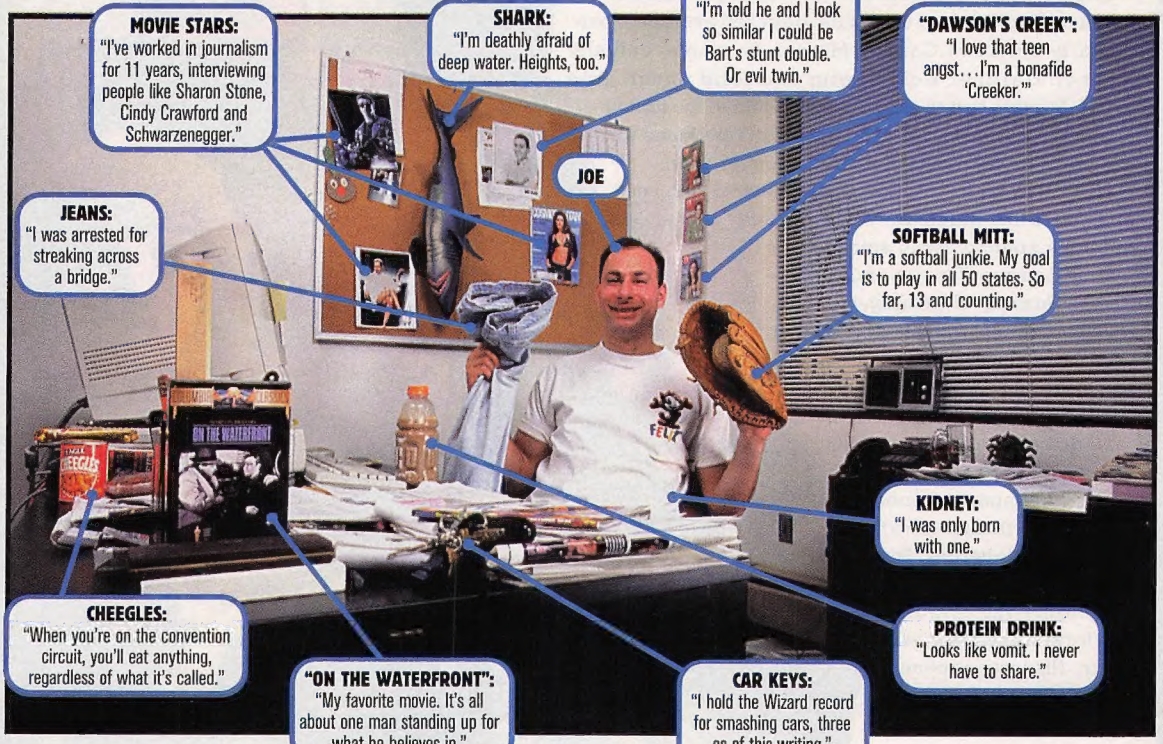


PHOTO: PAUL SCHRAGE/AUTOGRAPH

TIME TRAVEL by PETER SANDERSON and JOHN B. LACEY

# A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN

## DC showed fans the fun side of superheroes with 'Justice League' 11 years ago.

**Andrew Helfer was pulling his hair out.** It was mid-1986 and the *Justice League of America* editor had just been given the order to revamp DC's premier superteam. The current roster of Gypsy, Vixen and Vibe just wasn't cutting it without big guns like Batman and Superman. Helfer was already pumped to make the original JLA formula work again and was convinced that it could. There was just one problem—he couldn't use the top-tier heroes. Superman, Wonder Woman and Flash were all being revamped at the time courtesy of creators John Byrne, George Pérez and Mike Baron, respectively. What Helfer got was Keith Giffen.

Every Friday like clockwork, the former *Legion of Super-Heroes* co-plotter/penciler would slip in and out of Helfer's office, jokingly hissing two words: "Justisss League." But Giffen was hardly an established writer, and only after seven weeks of sweating his JLA roster woes, did Helfer finally give in. Giffen was his only choice, and he got the job.

With his new partner-in-crime, Helfer quickly tackled the roster problem by giving the team a focus other than demolishing world-dominators. Mixing strait-laced heroes Batman and Martian Manhunter with goofballs Guy Gardner (Green Lantern) and Blue Beetle offered plenty of opportunity for humor. Toss in former *JLA* writer J.M. DeMatteis to script over Giffen's plots (Giffen wasn't confident enough to script the book himself), and newcomer penciler Kevin Maguire, and an all-new title, simply called *Justice League*, was born in 1987. This League was a superhero fraternity and readers were invited inside the frathouse.

Whatever you call it, this new Justice League worked. The nuisance Guy Gardner constantly pestered everyone, particularly the naive Captain Marvel. Batman eventually cleaned Gardner's clock with one solid punch. And Mister Miracle had to sheepishly explain to his furious (and super-strong) wife that he wouldn't be home for another 24 hours 'cause he was on monitor duty.

Fans welcomed this new *Justice League* with such open arms that within two years, the title quickly expanded with spinoffs like *Justice League Europe* and *Justice League Quarterly*. Eventually, however, Helfer and company moved on to other projects, the Justice League titles grew more serious and the entire Justice League line was canceled.

Oddly enough, some 10 years after *JL* began, DC successfully relaunched another *JLA* series—this time *with* its big-gun superheroes. So in the end, it seems Helfer was right—the original JLA formula could work again. His just happened to work first.

### DATELINE

**MAY 1987**

Moviegoers flocked to theaters in droves to see *"Beverly Hills Cop II,"* while avoiding Dustin Hoffman and Warren Beatty's *"Ishtar."*...A fuzzy wisecrackin' alien named Alf was introduced to NBC's Monday night lineup...U2's *"With or Without You"* topped *Billboard*'s charts...Former Colorado Senator Gary Hart dropped out of the race for the Democratic presidential nomination after the exposure of his affair with model Donna Rice.

U2's BONO

PHOTO BY ANTON CORBIJN

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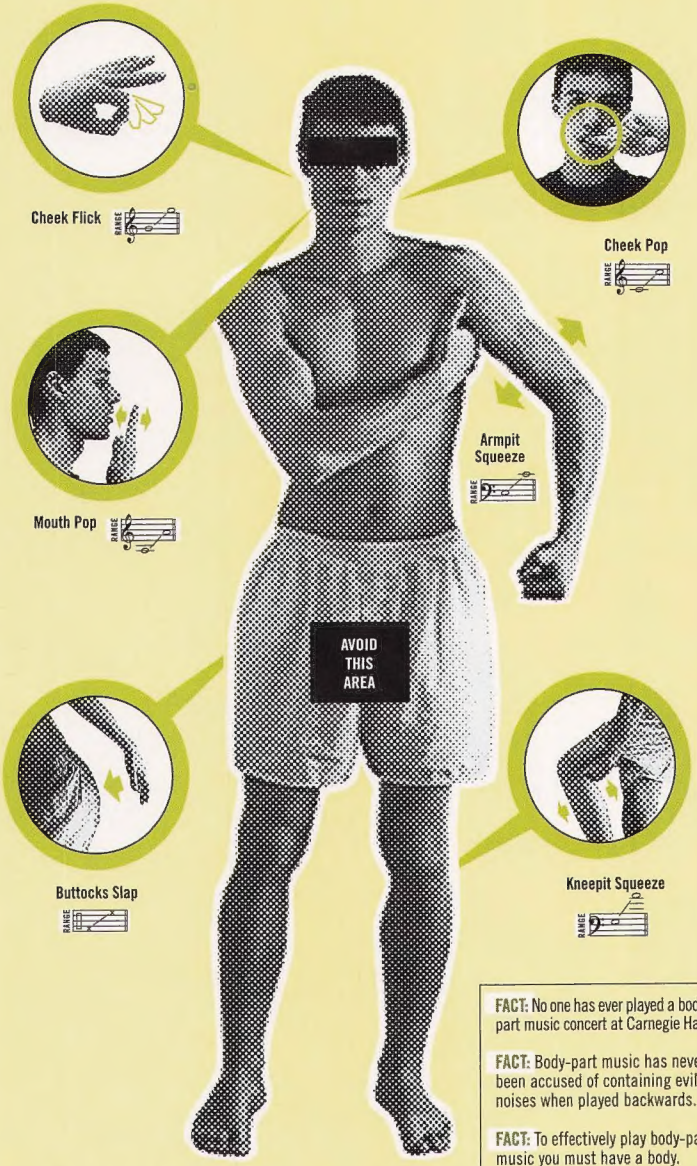
CHERRY COKE® INSTRUCTIONAL SERIES

NO. NK5-OTB

# BODY-PART MUSIC

The human anatomy is a potpourri of music potential. Here's your guide to playing it all.




**FACT:** No one has ever played a body-part music concert at Carnegie Hall.

**FACT:** Body-part music has never been accused of containing evil noises when played backwards.

**FACT:** To effectively play body-part music you must have a body.

## DETAIL

### HAND WHISTLE

To reach a variety of notes, cup your hands together to create a hollow cavity, like when catching a grasshopper (for those who've only tortured and squished grasshoppers, this will take getting used to). Then blow across the opening made by your thumbs. To vary the pitch, open and close your fingers.

### HEAD KNOCK

Use a clenched fist or open palm to make this sound. Just beware, rapping the top of your noggin can be painful. Of course, all great artists suffer for their art.

### MOUTH POP

Popping your mouth creates great musical sounds. But a word of warning: avoid doing this when intensely jamming. One overzealous strike can hurt like the dickens, and causes blisters.

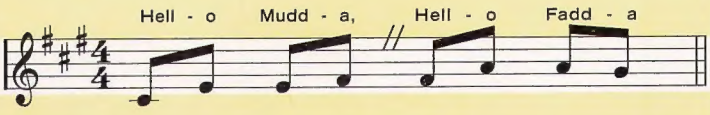
### ARMPIT SQUEEZE

To most, a hand in the armpit is nothing more than the whoopee cushion of human anatomy. To a body musician it's a finely-tuned instrument. Just make sure your palm is facing inward and your hand is slightly cupped. This ensures you achieve maximum sonic quality.

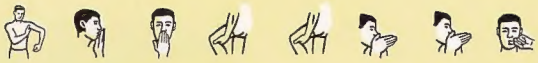
### BUTTOCKS SLAP

The buttocks can produce various pitches depending on your body's position. When upright, a firm strike creates a low tone. Bending over tightens the skin, creating a slightly higher pitched tone.

## Now you're ready to play




ACTION



**DISCLAIMER** - People mock what they don't understand. Geniuses throughout history have been forced to endure the artistic ignorance of fools. As a body musician you may also face this problem. People might be inclined to heave mushy rotten tomatoes at your head. Be warned.

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SLP. 3402-457

1:6 scale

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